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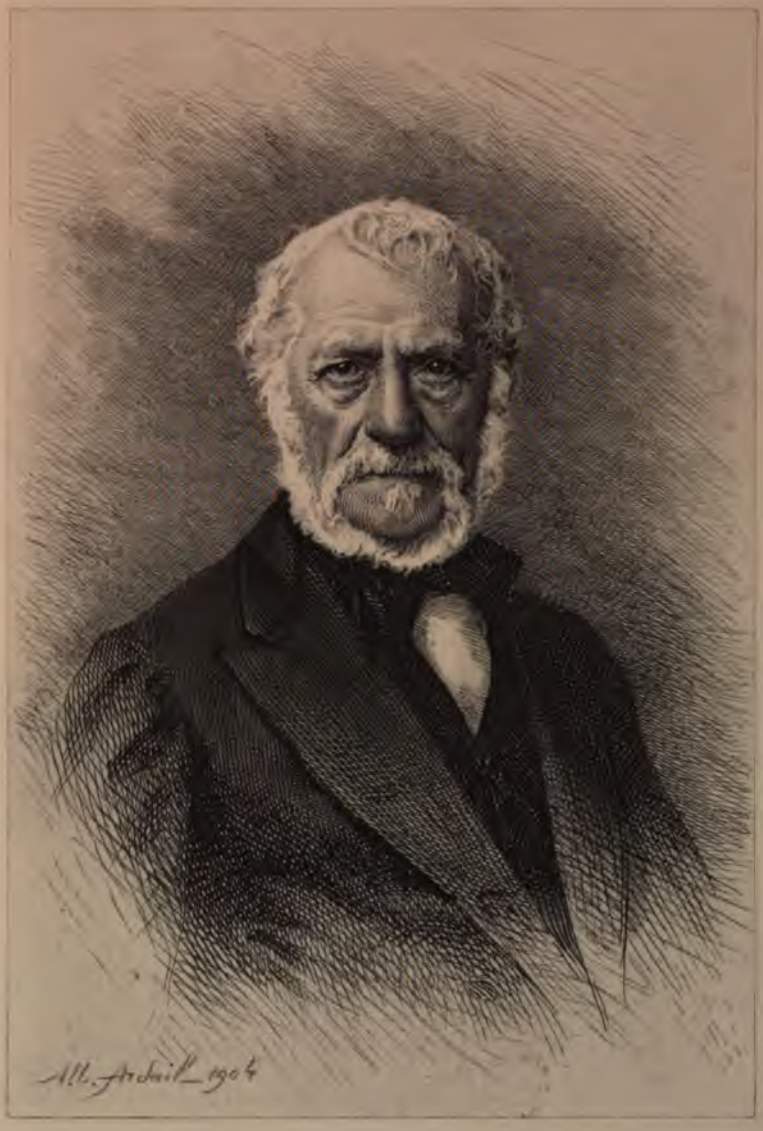


VOLUME XI

FRANCE, 843–1715.

Corners;	Order of the Holy Ghost.
Groundwork;	Fleur-de-lis.
Crown;	Royal Crown of France.
Shield;	1 and 4. Arms of Ancient France.
	2 and 3. Arms of Bourbon France.
	Center shield, the royal arms of the Dauphins (Daufins)
Supporters;	Right side, the Angel of Royal France.
	Left side, an ancient King of France.

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TOGETHER WITH AN ESSAY IN FOUR PARTS

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL EVOLUTION OF FRANCE

BY

ALFRED RAMBAUD

WITH ADDITIONAL CITATIONS FROM

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CHAPTER I

THE LATER CARLOVINGIANS

[843–987 A.D.]

CHARLES THE BALD (843–877 A.D.)

Up to the present we have told the history of the Gauls, the Gallo-Romans, and the Franks; with the Treaty of Verdun we begin the history of the French people. There now existed in France, except the Northmen, who already were beginning to appear on its coast and who established themselves there only in small numbers, all the races of which her people are formed, and all the elements, Celtic, Roman, Christian, and Germanic, whose combination goes to make up her civilisation. The medley is even already too sufficiently advanced for one to distinguish any longer the Gallo-Roman from the Frank, the civilised man from the barbarian. All have the same customs and almost all the same tongue. The French idiom showed itself officially in the Treaty of Verdun. Law ceases to be personal and becomes local; national custom replaces the Roman or barbaric codes; there are scarcely any slaves; there are but few free men — we shall soon see nothing but serfs and lords.

But this France has no longer the extent of Gaul; the Treaty of Verdun has confined it to the Schelde and the Maas, the Saône and the Rhone, and the population within these narrow limits finds them still too broad; they wish to live apart, for themselves alone, and not to sustain a vast dominion which is crushing them and which they do not understand.

The son of Judith and Louis le Débonnaire, Charles the Bald, king of France since 840, was nothing but an ambitious man of the people. Length of days was generously bestowed upon him, as it had been with Charlemagne, for he reigned thirty-seven years — but he knew how to do nothing with his life. Difficulties, it is true, were great. The same year when the destinies of the empire were moulded at Fontenailles, Asnar, count of Jaca, helped himself to the sovereignty of Navarre, and the Northmen burned Rouen — in 843 they pillaged Nantes, Saintes, and Bordeaux. At the same

time the Aquitanians rose up for a national king. The Bretons had found theirs in Noménoë, whom Charles had excommunicated by the bishops, but who defeated his lieutenants; and Septimania had its chief in Bernhard. The Saracens and the Greek pirates ravaged the south while the Northmen devastated the north and the west. And as if to fill the cup of misfortune of which this age was the bearer, the Hungarians, successors of the Huns and Avars, were putting in an appearance in the east.

THE NORTHMEN

These dreaded pirates, the Northmen, were the men whom hunger, thirst for pillage, and love of adventure drove each year from the sterile regions of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. In three days an east wind brought their two-masted ships to the mouth of the Seine. The fleet obeyed a *kuning* or king. "But," says Augustin Thierry, "he was king only at sea and in battle; for when the banquet hour arrived the whole troop sat at the same table, and the beer-filled horns passed from hand to hand without there being a first or a last. The sea-king was followed everywhere with fidelity and obeyed with zeal, for always he was reputed the bravest of the brave, like him who had never drained a cup at a protected fireside.

"He knew how to handle ships as a good knight his horse, and to the ascendency of courage and skill there was added the power that superstition gave him. He was initiated in the sciences of the Runes. He knew the mysterious characters which, graven on swords, would procure victory, and those which inscribed on the stern or on the oars would prevent shipwreck. All equal under such a chief, supporting lightly their voluntary submission and the weight of mailed armour which they promised themselves to exchange for an equal weight of gold, the Danish pirates gaily travelled the 'path of the swans,' as their ancient national poetry called it. Now they hugged the shores and watched their enemy in the narrow straits, bays, and little anchorage grounds, from which they got their name of vikings, — children of the bays and creeks, — now they hurled themselves forth in pursuit of him across the ocean. The violent storms of the North Sea scattered and crushed their frail ships. There were always some missing when from the chief's ship came the signal to gather together, but those who survived their shipwrecked companions had no less confidence and no more concern. They laughed at the winds and the waves which could not destroy them. 'The might of the storm,' they sang, 'aids the arms of our oarsmen — the tempest is at our service; it throws us where we would go.'"

Some of them often, in the midst of the clash of arms and the sight of blood, became possessed with a sort of mad fury which redoubled their strength and made them insensible to wounds — as if they saw revealed to their eyes the palace of their god Odin and the shining hall of Valhalla. Others showed an irresistible courage under torture, and sang their death-song in the agonies of torment. Thus the famous Lodbrog, when thrown into a ditch filled with vipers, flung proudly back these words to his enemies:

"We have fought with the sword. I was still young when in the East, under the stars of Eirar, we dug a river of blood for the wolves and invited the yellow-legged bird to a great banquet of corpses: the sea was red like a fresh-opened wound and the ravens swam in blood.

"We have fought with the sword. I have seen near Aienlane (England) numberless bodies filling the decks of the ships; we continued the fight for

[837–847 A.D.]

six whole days and the enemy did not give in; the seventh, at sunrise, we celebrated the mass of swords. Valthiof was forced to bend under our arms.

"We have fought with the sword. Torrents of blood rained from our swords at Partohyrth (Pesth). The vulture could find no more in the bodies; the bow thrummed and arrows buried themselves in coats of mail; sweat ran over the sword blades. They poured poison into the wounds and harvested the warriors like Odin's hammer.

"We have fought with the sword. Death seizes me. The bite of the vipers has been deep. I feel their teeth at my heart. Soon, I hope the sword will avenge me in the blood of Ælla. My sons will rage at news of my death — anger will redden their visages; besides, brave warriors will take no rest until they have avenged me.

"I must cease — behold the Dysir whom Odin sends to lead me to his joyful palace. I go thither with the Ases, to quaff hydromel at the seat of honour. The hours of my life have run out and my smile braves death."

Religious and warlike fanaticism are here joined together — these pirates loved to shed the blood of priests and stable their horses in the churches. When they had ravaged a Christian land: "We have sung them," they said, "the mass of spears; it began at early morn and lasted till the night." Charlemagne felt these terrible invaders from afar; under Louis le Débonnaire they grew bolder. Some of them set up abodes, in 837, on the island of Walcheren, and made tributary the river lands of the Maas and the Waal. After 843 they came every year. From the mouth of the Schelde, the Somme, the Seine, the Loire, and the Gironde, they ascended into the interior of the country. A number of towns, even the more important, as Orleans and Paris, were taken and pillaged by them without Charles being able to make any defence. From the Rhine to the Adour, from the ocean to the Cévennes and the Vosges, all was devastated. They even acquired the habit of not returning home during the winter and settled down on the island of Oissel — above Rouen, at Noirmoutiers at the mouth of the Loire and on the island of Bière, near St. Florent. It was thither they carried their booty and thence they set out on new expeditions.

EDICT OF MERSEN (847 A.D.)

Chroniclers not understanding that apathy of the Frankish nation once so brave, who now let themselves be pillaged by a handful of adventurers, could only explain these things on the supposition that there had been a tremendous massacre at Fontenailles (Fontenay).

La peri de France la flor
Et des baronz tuit li meillor
Ansi troverènt Haenz terre
Vinde de gent, bonne a conquerre.

[There perished the flower of France
And the best of all the barons died
And thus was the land of Haenz
Void of the brave — easy to conquer.]

There is some truth in these words. Charlemagne's fifty-three expeditions had used up the Frankish race, and his conquests, where always some of his warriors were left behind to rule, had spread it over three kingdoms. The dissensions of Louis le Débonnaire's sons completed this dissemination. Now there were no longer free men to be found, because of the terrible

results of so many wars, because in the midst of growing anarchy almost all the free men had renounced an independence which left them in isolation and consequently in danger, to become the vassals of men able to protect them. The Edict of Mersen (847) says, "Every freeman may choose a lord, either the king or one of his vassals, and no vassal of the king will be obliged to follow him in war unless against a foreign enemy." With the subjects thus disposing of their obedience, the king in civil war remained unarmed and powerless, and as he was as incapable of making the great obey him as he was of protecting the small, the latter gathered around the former. The king's vassals diminished; those of the great lords increased. On all sides national interest was forgotten in solicitude for that of the individual. Rouen troubled itself little about the misfortunes of Bordeaux, Saintes, and Paris, and that is why in this age, as in the last days of the Roman Empire, and for the same reason, namely the absence of that common and spirited sentiment known as patriotism, a few small bands could ravage a great country. Charles tried to send them back by giving them gold; but this was the surest means to attract them. The Roman Empire had done the same thing with the barbarians, and we know with what result.

THE NORTHMEN'S ALLIES

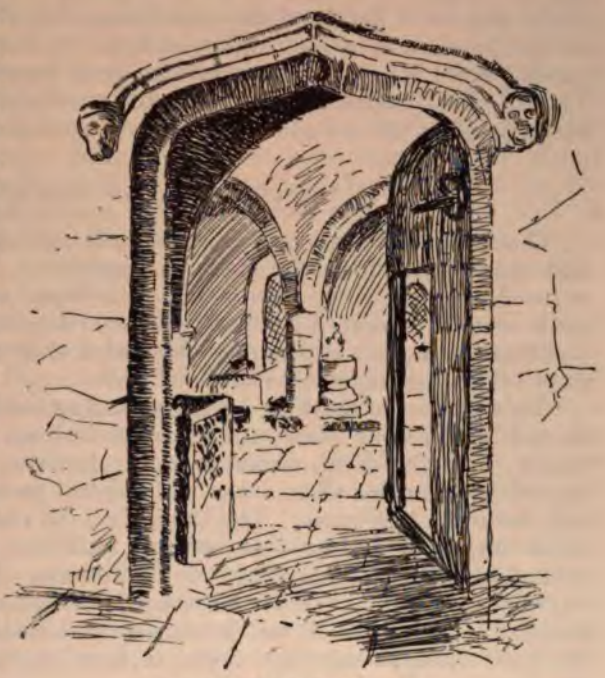
The number of true Northmen must have been comparatively few, since they came from afar and over the sea. "But," as a chronicler of the time remarks, "many inhabitants of the country, forgetting their regeneration in the holy waters of baptism, plunged into the dark errors of the pagans: they ate with these pagans the flesh of horses sacrificed to Thor and Odin, and took part in their atrocious crimes." And these renegades were the most to be feared. They acted as guides to the invaders, they knew how to foil the ruses their countrymen adopted to cheat the greed of the barbarians, and showed even less respect and mercy than the latter for the religion and the people they had abandoned. Sometimes even some of the powerful nobles were paid by the Northmen, with money raised by the pillage of France, so as not to be disturbed in their expeditions.

The most dreadful of these pirates was Hastings, who ravaged the banks of the Loire from 843 to 850, sacked Bordeaux and Saintes, threatened Tours, which still celebrates to-day, on the 21st of May, a victory won from him, circumnavigated Spain and, robbing and burning the while, reached the shores of Italy. He had been drawn by the great name and wealth of the capital of Christendom; but he mistook Luna for Rome. Hastings sent word to the count and the bishop that his companions, conquerors of France, wished no harm to the people of Italy and only wished to repair his storm-battered ships, and that he himself, wearied of his roving life, wished to seek repose in the bosom of the church. The bishop and the count refused him nothing; Hastings even received baptism; but the gates of the town remained shut. Some time after the camp was filled with lamentations; Hastings was dangerously ill. Messengers came with the news and declared at the same time that the dying man intended to leave all his booty to the church provided his body might be interred in consecrated ground. The Northmen's cries of grief soon announced the death of their chief. They were permitted to bring his body into the town, and the funeral ceremony was prepared in the cathedral itself. But when they had set down the corpse in the middle of the choir, Hastings suddenly rose up and struck the bishop down, while his companions, drawing their concealed arms,

[850-882 A.D.]

massacred both priests and soldiers. Master of Luna, Hastings perceived his mistake. He was made to understand that Rome was a long way off, and could not be so easily captured, so he set sail with his booty and at the end of several months reappeared at the mouth of the Loire.

Charles the Bald had reunited one part of the country, between the Seine and the Loire, under command of Robert the Strong, ancestor of the Capetians, in order to oppose a more efficacious resistance to the Northmen and the Bretons, a great number of whom had joined the pirates. Robert gained two victories over the Bretons and defeated a body of Northmen loaded with the booty of Brie and of the town of Meaux. This was the valiant leader whom Hastings encountered on his return from Italy. He had just sacked Le Mans when Robert and the duke of Aquitaine caught up with him at Brissarthe (Pont-sur-Sarthe) near Angers. The barbarians numbered but four hundred, half Northmen, half Bretons; and at Robert's approach they betook themselves to a church and barricaded it. It was evening, and the French put off the attack until the next day. Robert had already taken off his helmet and coat of mail, when the Northmen, suddenly opening the doors, threw themselves upon the dispersed troops. Robert rallied his men, drove the enemy back to the church, and tried to follow them in. But he fought with bared head and breast and on the threshold was mortally wounded. Duke Rainulf of Aquitaine fell by his side (866). Hastings, delivered of his dread adversary, ascended the Loire and made his way as far as Clermont-Ferrand. No other means could be found of ridding France than by giving him, in 882, the county of Chartres. But he even abandoned this at the age of nearly seventy, to resume his life of adventure.



ANCIENT FRENCH DOORWAY

BEGINNING OF THE GREAT FIEFS

The Northmen were the greatest but not the only one of Charles' troubles; the Breton Noménoë repelled all his attacks, crowned himself king, and left the title to his son Hérispoë. The Aquitanians elected as leader the son of their late king, Pepin II, whom Charles the Bald had deposed. Driven out on account of his vices, Pepin allied himself with the Northmen and Saracens to pillage his former subjects, but he was captured and shut up in a cloister. Charles recovered, for the time, Aquitaine, lost it, recovered it again and gave it to one of his sons. But the true masters of the country

were Raymond, count of Toulouse, who also ruled over Rouergue and Quercy; Walgrin, count of Angoulême; Sancho Mitara, duke of Gascony, whose capital was Bordeaux; Bernhard, marquis of Septimania; Rainulf, duke of Aquitaine and count of Poitiers; Bernard Plantevelue, count of Auvergne; all of whom founded hereditary houses. To the north of the Loire, Charles had been constrained in the same way to constitute, for Robert the Strong, the grand duchy of France, from which sprang the third line of kings. North of the Somme it had been the same thing with the county of Flanders, given to the king's son-in-law, Baldwin Bras de Fer (Iron Arm), and between the Loire and Saône, the powerful duchy of Burgundy for Richard the Judge. Thus under Charlemagne's grandson not only was the empire divided into kingdoms, but the kingdoms themselves were dismembered into fiefs.[1]

EDICTS OF PISTES AND QUIERZY

Charles made, however, more and more the effort to retain in his service and that of the state the class of freedmen. In 863, the Edict of Pistes ordered a census of the men bound to military duty. The most severe penalties were pronounced against those who deprived these men of their horses and their arms, and also against the artful ones who sought to avoid military duty by giving themselves to the church.

This prince, so weak at home, wished nevertheless to aggrandise himself abroad. The king who could not wear his own crown undertook to acquire others. At the death of the emperor Lothair, in 855, the inheritance was shared between his three sons. The eldest took Italy, the second Lorraine, and the third Provence. The last only lived until 863, and the king of Lorraine until 869, and neither had any children. Charles the Bald tried, on their death, to lay hands on their dominions. His plans miscarried in 863, but succeeded in 870, when he shared Lorraine with his brother, Louis the German. In spite of the weakness and dishonour of his reign, Charles the Bald brought together again, at least on one side, the France which the Treaty of Verdun had broken up.

Instead of continuing this policy Charles sought for the imperial crown, left once more without a wearer in 875. He sought it in Rome from the hands of the pope, took on his return to Milan that of the Lombard kingdom, and as his brother, Louis the German, had died, he attempted to annex the latter's dominions to his own—that is, Germany to France. At this moment the Northmen took Rouen from him. He was beaten on the Rhine; Italy likewise escaped him.[b]

Unity existed only in the ambitious fancy of the feeble Charles. In spite of his titles and his crowns, his power in Italy, Lorraine, and Provence was as much a cipher as it was in Gaul; the dismemberment of the kingdoms into duchies and counties, and of the latter into viscounties, *sireries*, and *seigneuries*, still continued; and, at the very moment when he was dreaming of his grandfather's empire, he was finally completing his own destruction by changing the feudal system from a custom into a law.

Before going to Italy in 877, he assembled a diet at Quierzy to formulate rules for the government of Gaul by his son, and there was delivered that famous capitulary from which we may date the feudal revolution: "If one of

[1 The gradual re-absorption of these fiefs or provinces into the royal domain is the story of the development of the French monarchy. They were annexed at different periods by conquest, purchase, voluntary or forced cession, confiscation, forfeiture, inheritance, marriage, or treaty. The reader is referred to the chronological table for the dates and manner of these annexations.]

[877-879 A.D.]

our trusty subjects," runs this capitulary, "inspired by the love of God, desire to renounce the world, and if he have a son or some other relative capable of serving the state, he is free to transmit to him his privileges and honours at pleasure. If a count of this kingdom dies, we desire that the nearest relatives of the deceased, the other officers of the county, and the bishops of the diocese provide for its administration until such time as we shall be able to intrust his son with the honours with which he was invested."

This capitulary effected no change in the existing state of things, it only confirmed accomplished facts and legalised a revolution which had its origin in the customs of the Germans even before their entry into Gaul, that is to say the transformation of fiefs into freeholds and the acquisition of hereditary rights in duchies and counties. From this time the distinction between *allods* and *feods* had no longer either reality or importance; as the son of the count inherited not only the domains but also the offices of his father, the distinction between the magistrate sent from the king and the lord of the manor was done away; and the titles of duke and count no longer expressed merely an office, an honour, or a dignity, but sovereign rights. The feudal system was thus inscribed in the law.[c]

Such was the condition in which Charles the Bald left France when, in 877, he went to Italy, to fulfil the obligations he had contracted on receiving the imperial crown. Pope John VIII had begged him to drive the Saracens from the peninsula, and repress the aggressions of his nephew Carloman, king of Bavaria, a pretender to the empire. It is astonishing, the persistence with which Charlemagne's descendants, in taking arms against each other, not only hastened the disorganisation of their own states, but accomplished the rapid ruin of their house in Italy, Germany, and even France, where it lasted three or four generations longer than anywhere else. The campaign of 877 bore no result. Charles' only idea after he got to Italy seems to have been to pillage the imperial domains. Abandoned for the most part by his vassals, he was obliged to return to France, fell ill during the return, and died the 6th of October, a few days after he had crossed the Mont Cenis.

LOUIS II TO CARLOMAN (877-884 A.D.)

Louis the Stammerer, given a share in the throne during his father's lifetime, was crowned by Hincmar at Compiègne in presence of most of the great vassals. By the advice of Hincmar the new king pledged himself to disturb no man in the possession of his benefices or offices and to respect the liberty of the churches. He was also obliged to make a distribution of lands, abbeys, and counties "to whoever," says one chronicle, "demanded them first."

Charles the Bald had worn four crowns, those of France, the empire, Italy, and Lorraine. His son inherited the first only. The imperial crown and the crown of Italy passed to the head of a Carlovingian prince of the Germanic branch. Ludwig of Saxony contended with Louis the Stammerer for that of Lorraine and the two claimants came to terms by dividing the kingdom on the bases of the treaty of 870. This treaty was renewed in 878 at Fouron on the Maas. The south was troubled by the revolt of Bernhard, marquis of Gothia, who took arms and formed a league of malcontents. But Bernhard, count of Auvergne, and Boson, duke of Provence, took from him successively Gothia and several counties which he possessed in Burgundy.

Louis the Stammerer, having fallen into a decline, died in 879 at Compiègne leaving two sons, Louis and Carloman, of whom the eldest was sixteen years old. The seigneurs were divided; some wished to proclaim the young

French princes, others to give the crown to the German prince, Ludwig of Saxony. But the party of French princes was the most numerous and the abbot Hugo, who was its leader, hastened to crown the two brothers.[d] Two victories over the Northmen, notably that of Saucourt in Vimeu, gave a little glory to these princes. But these advantages did not prevent the recommencement of brigandage. In 885 the famous Hastings gave up the county of Chartres, and Carloman paid the others of his race to take themselves off. "They promised peace," says the chronicler sadly, "for as many years as we could count them one thousand pounds' weight of silver." The two kings died by accident, Louis in 882, Carloman in 884. One had governed the north of France, the other Burgundy and Aquitaine.



LOUIS III AND CARLOMAN
(From an old print)

CHARLES THE FAT, KING AND EMPEROR (884–887 A.D.)

These two had a brother, Charles the Simple, but the nobles preferred a grandson of Louis le Débonnaire, Charles the Fat, then emperor and king of Germany. The whole heritage of Charlemagne was now reunited in Charles the Fat's hands. But times had changed. This man weighted down with so many crowns could not even inspire terror in the Northmen.

Charles had already ceded Friesland to one of their chiefs. Another, the famous Rollo, a kind of giant who, as legend tells us, always went about on foot because no horse could be found for his mount, had recently taken Rouen and Pontoise and killed the duke of Le Mans. At the approach of his countrymen, the new count of Chartres, the former pirate Hastings, hastened to meet them and all marched upon Paris, which had already three times submitted to the sack. But Paris had recently been fortified. Great towers covered the bridges (Petit-Pont and Pont-au-Change) which connected the island of the city of Paris with the two shores. The Seine was then barricaded with seven hundred huge barges in which the Northmen intended to voyage into Burgundy, a region they had not yet visited. The inhabitants, encouraged by their bishop Gozlin and by Count Eudes, son of Robert the Strong, held out for one year. The attack began November 26th, 885. The tower of the Grand-Pont, on the right bank, not being finished, the Northmen assailed it. For two days they fought there with great fury and Bishop Gozlin was wounded by a javelin. The Northmen were driven back and intrenched themselves in a camp around the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, where deserters soon taught them all the knowledge of Roman military science that had survived the ages. The invaders first built a three-storied rolling tower, but when they tried to bring it up to the walls, the Parisians killed with arrows those who were moving it. Then they advanced with battering-rams, some under portable screens covered with raw leather for protection from fire, and some

[885–887 A.D.]

under shields in the form of the Roman testudo. When they came to the edge of the moat they began to fill it up with earth, fascines, whole trees, and even the bodies of captives whom they put to death before the very eyes of the besieged. While those farthest away drove off the defenders of the battlements with a hail-storm of arrows and leaden ball, those close to the tower hammered it with the rams; but all in vain. The Parisians poured streams of boiling oil, wax, and molten pitch upon the enemy; their catapults hurled huge rocks which crushed the assailants' screens and shields, and let down iron hooks which tore away the coverings and made the enemy a target for their arrows. Three blazing ships floated down to the bridge, were stopped by the abutting stone piles, and could not set it on fire.

This hopeless resistance had lasted for more than two months when a sudden rise of the river carried away, on the night of February 6th, 886, a portion of the "Petit-Pont." The Northmen immediately rushed upon the tower on the left bank, now cut off from the city. Only twelve men were stationed there, but they held out for a whole day and then retired, still fighting, to the wreckage of the bridge. Finally they surrendered on the promise that their lives would be saved, but as soon as the barbarians got hold of these brave men they put them to death. One of them, of gigantic frame, appeared to be a chief, and the Northmen decided to spare him; but he begged to share the fate of his companions. "You will never get ransom for my head," he told them, and so forced them to kill him.

Meanwhile reports of the Parisians' courage had spread over the land and others were emboldened to emulate their example. Several pirate bands which had left the siege were beaten; the counsellor of the emperor Charles, Duke Henry, succeeded even in getting relief into the besieged town, but the pagans still maintained the blockade. Misery became extreme in the city and many people died. Bishop Gozlin and the count of Anjou "passed to the Lord." The brave count Eudes managed to make his way out and went to hasten the emperor's arrival, and when he saw the latter started, went back to his besieged people. The promised relief finally appeared, Duke Henry at its head. Wishing to reconnoitre the situation himself the duke advanced too near, and his horse fell into one of the Northmen's pits. Here he was killed and those who had come with him were disbanded. Paris was once more left to its fate. The Northmen now believed that despair reigned there, and that they could have the people at little cost. They began a general attack, but the walls covered with valiant defenders proved insurmountable. They then tried to fire the door of the great tower, by heaping up against it a great wooden pile, but the Parisians made a sudden sortie and drove back the assailants and the fire at the same time.

At the end of long months, Charles finally arrived with his army on the heights of Montmartre. The Parisians, filled with ardour, awaited the signal of combat, when the news came to them that the emperor had bought with money the withdrawal of their half vanquished enemy and given the barbarians permission to "winter" in Burgundy, that is to say, to ravage that province. They at least refused to be a party to this shameful agreement, and when the Northmen's ships presented themselves at the bridges they refused to let them pass. The pirates had to drag their boats upon the shore and made a wide detour in order to avoid the heroic city (November, 886). The brave people of Sens imitated the courage of the Parisians and resisted the Northmen for six months.

In that year Paris gloriously won its title of capital of France; and its chief, the brave count Eudes, laid the foundation of the first national

dynasty. The contrast between the courage of the little city and the cowardice of the emperor turned everyone against the unworthy prince.[b] On all sides he was accused of indolence and incapacity. A great weakness of body and spirit had come over him. The vassals wanted an able and active king.

Those of Germany and Lorraine, assembled at Tribur, near Mainz, in 887, pronounced Charles' deposition "because he was lacking," says the *Annals* of St. Waast, "in the necessary strength to govern the empire." The feeble and unfortunate emperor suffered the fate of the "do-nothing" Merovingian kings. He was shut up in the monastery of Reichenau, on Lake Constance, and died in about two months.[d] The empire of Charlemagne was irrevocably dismembered; its pieces served to form seven kingdoms — France, Navarre, Cisjurane Burgundy, Transjurane Burgundy, Lorraine, Italy, and Germany.

THE FEUDAL RÉGIME

But it was not only the empire that was dismembered; it was also the realm and royalty itself. At the close of Charlemagne's reign, feudalism was not yet founded, but it was almost completely established at the death of Charles the Bald a half century afterwards. And this was because the progress of feudal institutions was singularly hastened by the historical events we have just been studying.

Royal authority at the end of Charles the Bald's reign was ruined, as it had been under the later Merovingians, for the same reasons and in the same fashion. The king had no more money and he had no more land to give away. He tried to take from the church, but the church resisted. The bishops assembled in council at Meaux and at Paris in 846, in the early years of the reign, advised Charles the Bald to send *missi dominici* to make a thorough investigation of the lands of the royal fisc, which had been usurped. "You must not," they told him, "let a state of poverty, which does not accord with your dignity, push your magnificence to do things you would not wish to do. You cannot have attendants to serve you in your house, unless you have the means to pay them." Here we see royalty reduced to indigence. The king himself recognised it. "We wish," he said, one day, "to determine, with the advice of our faithful, how we may live in our court honourably and without poverty, as our predecessor did."

Since the reign of Charles the Bald, public authority had disappeared. The kingdom, ravaged by the Northmen, the Bretons, and the Aquitanians, was in the throes of brigandage. Brigandage had sunk so deeply into the customs of the country that oaths were exacted from freemen not to attack houses or to conceal robbers. In his twenty-third capitulary (857) the king, after speaking of the infinite evils caused not only by the incursions of the pagans, but also by the vagabondage of some of his own royal subjects, orders the bishops, counts, and *missi* to call together general meetings which everyone without exception must attend. The bishop was to read to the gathering the precepts of the Gospels, the fathers, and the prophets against brigandage. The capitulary itself furnished quotations from Christ, the prophet Isaiah, St. Augustine and St. Gregory. If these were not sufficient the bishop was to add all those he might find himself. He was also to threaten all hardened sinners with anathema, and to explain to them what a terrible punishment it was. On their own side the counts and missi were to read the laws of Charles and of Louis against brigandage.

If these readings had no effect the guilty man was threatened with the sentence of the bishops and the prosecution of the judges. If he showed contempt for the one or the other he could be summoned to the king's presence. If he refused to come he would be excluded from the holy church, on earth



RUINS OF A NORMAN CHURCH, FRANCE

as well as in heaven. He would be pursued until driven from the realm. But to this there must be a public force, and such existed no longer; and this is why the king was compelled to replace it with sermons and threats of hell.

In no age of history did the weak have more need of protection than in the tenth and eleventh centuries, and this is why the last freemen disappeared throughout a large portion of Gaul, especially north of the Loire.

After having fled for a long time at the approach of the pagans to the forest, among the wild beasts, some stout-hearted had turned their heads and refused to abandon all they had without some attempt at defence. Here and there in mountain gorges, at river fords, or on the hill overlooking the plain, walled strongholds were raised up where the brave and the strong held their own. An edict of 862 directed the counts and the king's vassals to repair their old castles and to build new ones. The country was soon covered with these strongholds against which invaders often flung themselves in vain. A few defeats taught these bold people prudence, and they dared not venture so far amid these fortresses which had sprung out of the ground on all sides, and the new invasion, now made hazardous and difficult, came to an end in the following century. The masters of these castles became later the terror of the country side they had helped to save. Feudalism so oppressive in its age of decadence had its legitimate term. All power is raised up by its good services and falls by its abuses. These hedged and walled-in castles were places of refuge from the Northmen, but often also they became nests of brigands. However, little by little, out of the chaos came a new order of things.

We have seen how the king and his nobles assured themselves of the services of a greater or less number of men by giving them benefices or rather taking these men under their protection by making them their vassals. One might be a beneficiary without being a vassal or a vassal without being a beneficiary; in the days of Charles the Bald there were vassals who held no land. These were the *vagi homines*, so often mentioned in the prince's edicts — brigands in search of fortune and who transferred their loyalty from one noble to another at their pleasure. It was to remedy these disorders and to organise these unruly members of society that Charles the Bald ordered every freeman to choose a lord and remain faithful to him.

Doubtless it happened more often than otherwise that the man who received a piece of land made himself a vassal of the man who gave it to him, but the two states finally became much confused. One might be at the same time both beneficiary and vassal, and take upon himself the very narrow obligations of one and the other condition. Indeed after a property had been held for several generations by men who inherited their obligations together with the land, it seemed as if the fief carried its rights and duties with it and communicated them to those that held it. In the end the property, which always remained, was considered rather than the men, who came and went. It was no longer the weak man who bound himself to the strong one but the little acreage to the great domain, and certain formalities symbolised this new relation. The land became his in a manner to replace itself in the hands of the great landlord, in the shape of a clod of sod or the branch of a tree, which the petty proprietor brought himself. This land, so burdened with obligations, was the fief.

When France became covered with fiefs each property had its own organisation; it had its lord, great or small, and there was no land without its lord. Whoever had no land had no condition, for there was no lord without his land. Certain relations were established between the different fiefs — there were some which were dominant and others which were dominated. The dominant fiefs were those of the dukes and the counts, who assumed all the power which royalty had delegated them and who ruled as petty kings over their duchies and counties. Their vassals and the latters' sub-vassals depended upon them before depending upon the king. As for the dukes and counts, they were the vassals of the king, but as the feudal

hierarchy developed, the obligation of the vassal became, as a matter of fact, less strict. The duke of Burgundy's vassals obeyed him; of course the duke of Burgundy would not make the mistake of disobeying the king.

Such was the great revolution accomplished at the end of the ninth and in the tenth century. After the deposition of Charles the Fat appeared the great fiefs whose names we find over and over again throughout the whole of French history. The duke of Gascony owned all the country south of the Garonne, and the counts of Toulouse, Auvergne, Périgord, Poitou, and Berri, the district between the Garonne and the Loire. To the east and north of the latter river everything belonged to the count of Forez, the duke of Burgundy, the duke of France, and to the counts of Flanders and Brittany who exercised their royal rights over the land. To the kings remained only a few towns which he had not yet been constrained to give away in fiefs.

THE CHURCH

In the ninth century royalty fell and feudalism arose; the former had lost its strength, the latter had not yet acquired that which it was soon to have. The church alone had all the power. She wanted nothing — the authority in knowledge and morality, the ardent faith of the people, rich domains — in fact, while everything was breaking up and civil and political society going to pieces, the ecclesiastical body showed its unity and its healthy condition in the fifty-six councils which were held in the reign of Charles the Bald alone. The bishops, reasoning on the right of the church to interfere in the conduct of every man guilty of sin in order to correct and punish him, arrived logically at the pretension that they could depose kings and dispose of their crowns. They were not only the ministers of religion, but participated at the time in the administration of public affairs. Since Charlemagne, who brought them into the government of his empire, they may be found taking part in all affairs and speaking everywhere with authority. These were they who degraded and re-established Louis le Débonnaire, who told at Fontenailles on which side justice lay. In 859 Charles the Bald, threatened with deposition by some of the bishops because he violated his own laws, could find nothing further to reply to this assumption of authority than that "having been consecrated and anointed with the holy chrism, he could not be overthrown on his throne, nor supplanted by anyone without being heard and judged by the bishops who had crowned him king." This right Archbishop Hincmar, of Rheims, the most illustrious personage of his day, had haughtily claimed.

This power of the church was a fortunate thing in these days, when might made right, for she alone found herself in a position to keep alive the idea that justice was above strength; and to oppose the aristocratic principle of the feudal organisation, she put forward that of the brotherhood of man. In place of hereditary primogeniture which prevailed in civil society, she practised election for herself and proclaimed the rights of the intellect. If the prerogative of deposing kings which she claimed was a usurpation of temporal authority it must be recognised that the latter had no antidote but the sacerdotal power, and the weak and oppressed no other security than the protection of the churches. When Lothair II, king of Lorraine, put away without reason Queen Thietberga in order to marry Waldrada, Pope Nicholas I took up the poor, betrayed, outraged woman's cause, and at the risk of persecution established her rights. While law was impotent and opinion without strength, it is well that somewhere there existed an avenger of outraged morality.[b]

CAPETIANS AND CARLOVINGIANS (887-936 A.D.)

Eight kings shared in the division of the empire through the deposition of Charles the Fat. In France it was Eudes, count of Paris, who had just defended that town against the Normans and whose glory was heightened by contrast with the ignominious conduct of Charles the Fat.

The accession of Count Eudes was an important fact, although overestimated perhaps, if one wishes to regard it as a bridge between Gaul and France and between the Franks and the French. It was not the beginning of a revolution of which he was the consummation ; nor yet a point of departure, for it was Frenchmen rather than Angevins who fought with Robert the Strong at Brissarthe. However, apart from the fact itself, the reign of the first French king was certainly important. The Normans, turned loose upon Burgundy by Charles the Fat, had gone still further ; they threw themselves upon Champagne which they were proceeding to ruin with fire and sword when the new king attacked them in the defiles of the Argonne, near Montfaucon. A brilliant victory made a worthy beginning to his reign, but that was all. Wearied by the fruitless struggle, occupied elsewhere by the anxieties which Aquitaine gave him where through race jealousy his "usurpation," as the monks of that time and the seventeenth century historians called it, had not been recognised, and at a time when they placed at the head of acts, *Christi regante : rege nullo* ("in the reign of Christ and absence of the king"). Eudes finally adopted the Carlovingian policy and drove the Normans back with his purse. What brought about his ruin was that he broke too abruptly with the feudalism that made him king. His cousin Vaucher rebelled against royal authority. Eudes could not understand that this authority was no longer anything but a phantom, even in his hands, and he had his cousin's head cut off after obtaining his submission. The people deplored the light-hearted nonentity of a Carlovingian king, but a faction which formed in favour of young Charles the Simple, youngest son of Louis the Stammerer, waxed in strength until the former count of Paris was obliged to capitulate. He admitted his rival to a sort of partnership and at his death the kingdom of France returned to Germanic dominion, if we can admit, that it is still possible to recall the Austrasian origin of Charles the Simple (898).

Under this reign the people were finally delivered from the long Norman invasion, which stopped of its own accord, and by act of the invaders rather than resistance of the invaded. Since the time the Norman vassals collected at the mouth of the Seine, the country round about had been nothing but a desert, towns abandoned, villages in ashes ; one could travel whole leagues without even hearing a dog bark. Since there was nothing more to be got they ran the risk of dying by hunger. The Normans finally perceived with their positive spirit that it was better to take possession of the land than to pillage its ruined inhabitants, and that it was worth more to make these rich territories valuable than to get sustenance from their ruins. Thenceforth everything was changed. The fleets from the north brought colonists instead of pirates, and the peasants found in their midst a protection which they could not have gotten anywhere else.

The new plan had been in operation for some time when a great emigration was determined upon in the north, owing to the subjection of all the chiefs under one head. The movement set out in the direction of Neustria under the leadership of Rollo, the famous sea-king — one of those who had assisted at the siege of Paris in the days of Charles the Fat, and had established a fixed home in that country. For some years the new-comers kept

[911-923 A.D.]

up their old practises. They burned St. Martin of Tours, and went to Bourges and killed the bishop. Rollo reappeared before the towers of the châtelet. Finally he came to an understanding with Charles the Simple, who gave him his daughter Gisela in marriage and raised him to the rank of the feudal barons, by legalising his seizure of Neustria. Rollo became duke of Normandy, and the king of France's vassal, not without making the latter often feel that he troubled himself little about the nominal suzerainty. When the time for doing homage came and they wished him to do it in the Carlovingian manner, by kissing the sovereign's foot, "No, by God," exclaimed the proud sea-king, and he signed to one of his soldiers to kiss the royal foot for him. But the soldier, not less proud, seized Charles' foot and put it to his lips without kissing it. The king fell back and his people remained dumb and motionless amid the laughter of Rollo and his companions[1] (912). The barbaric traits of the Normans did not prevent their quickly assimilating the semi-civilisation they found in their new country. Normandy was soon the most prosperous and best policed province in the kingdom. As Ordericus Vitalis[i] says, a child could have crossed it in safety, a purse full of gold in his hand. There runs a tale that one day while hunting Rollo hung his gold bracelets on a tree and they remained there two years without anyone's daring to touch them.

Charles the Simple lost no time in indemnifying himself for the cession of Neustria by the acquisition of Lorraine which became his on the death of Louis the Child, son of the emperor Arnulf; but he did not profit long by this addition to his realm. He had made a favourite of a person of low degree, a man named Haganon. Haganon, more solicitous than his master to uphold the royal dignity, soon displayed the desire of raising it, to his own profit, from the state of subjection in which it was kept by the powerful nobles. Two of the latter presented themselves four days in succession to speak with the king and waited in vain at the door of his bedchamber. They finally went away thoroughly angry, saying that Haganon would soon be king with Charles, or Charles a man of low condition with Haganon. Of these two noblemen, one was Henry the Fowler, or the Saxon, king of Germany, and the other Robert, duke of France, brother of the late king Eudes.

In 920, at a court held at Soissons, the nobles assembled together, all broke the blades of straw and threw them on the ground at the feet of Charles the Simple, declaring that they disowned him as their king. Each took his departure at once, and Charles remained alone on the spot where the assemblage had met. There followed two years of hesitation, at the end of which Robert, duke of France, caused himself to be proclaimed king in the cathedral of Rheims by his vassals and those of his son-in-law, Rudolf of Burgundy. Charles having retired to Lorraine, the new king prepared to seek him as far as the foot of the Ardennes. He did not anticipate any resistance, but Haganon purchased the services of a band of Normans, living along the Maas, which Charles led in person into Robert's domains. A battle took place on the plain of St. Médard (Soissons) near the Aisne (923). Robert, throwing his long white beard over his coat of arms, seized his banner and flung himself into the mêlée. He fell upon Fulbert, his rival's standard-bearer, when Charles cried out, "Take care, Fulbert." The

[1 "In this unseemly manner," says White,[e] "the pirate of the Baltic, and worshipper of the almost forgotten Odin, took his place among the Christian chivalry of Europe as duke of Normandy and one of the twelve peers of France." On his conversion Rollo took the name of Robert.]

standard-bearer, turning, dodged the blow which Robert was aiming, and cleft the duke's head with his sword. Charles the Simple gained nothing by this. Robert's son, Hugh, hastened up with his brother-in-law, Héribert de Vermandois, and remained to the end master of the battle-field, strewn with eighteen thousand dead.

Of the two men who had claimed the title of king that morning, one lay cold in death, the other was dethroned by defeat. Robert's son sent to consult his sister Emma, wife of Rudolf of Burgundy, to know what he should do with the crown on his hands. Emma replied that she would prefer to kiss the knees of her husband rather than those of her brother, and Rudolf was made king (July 13th, 923).



RUDOLF, KING OF FRANCE

The aged Rollo was now minded of the homage which he had formerly held so cheaply, and as faithful vassal loudly declared himself the protector of the vanquished king. Doubtless he preferred such a sovereign as Charles the Simple to a connection with that powerful house of the dukes of France, who moved everything at their pleasure. Unfortunately he did not have the king in his hands. Charles had taken refuge at Bonn with the king of Germany, the same Henry the Fowler whom he had once kept waiting at his own door. He wished now to make use of the services of Héribert of Vermandois, who swore to replace him on the throne. The king sought Count Héribert at the gates of St. Quentin, where the latter knelt and kissed the king's knee. The count's son refused to do the same and Héribert took him by the neck and forced him to kneel. Then he conducted the king into St. Quentin and entertained him with great magnificence. But the next day he had him seized in the night and conducted to Château Thierry, whence they carried him to the tower of Péronne. Héribert then marched with Rudolf against the Normans, who were with great difficulty driven back from the Île-de-France and Beauvoisis. Rudolf believed himself mortally wounded during an encounter in Artois and the inhabitants of Laon saw him carried into their city on a barrow. Rollo died a short time afterwards, leaving as successor his son, William Longsword.

The count of Vermandois had not undertaken this piece of treachery for nothing, and had already obtained the archbishopric of Rheims for his son, a child of five years. They placed the boy on a table in the presence of the bishops, and after stammering a few words of catechism, he was consecrated with the approbation of the onlookers. But even this did not satisfy the father's ambition, who demanded the county of Laon for himself. Rudolf,

[927-942 A.D.]

who was finding his restless and dangerous auxiliary too powerful, feared perhaps the fate of Charles the Simple, and met the demand with a refusal. Thereupon Héribert dragged Charles from prison, clothed him in rich raiment, and took him to the court of William Longsword, who saluted him as king. This was all that was needed to decide Rudolf, who ceded the county of Laon, and Charles was put back in Péronne. But when Héribert tried to commence the same game again, Rudolf this time took up arms and pressed him so hotly that he was obliged to flee to Germany. There now remained to him nothing but Péronne, but Henry the Fowler, the count of Flanders, and the duke of Lorraine interfered; Rudolf gave him back his possessions and died soon after without a male heir (936). Charles the Simple had preceded him by a few years to the tomb (929). The vacant throne was for a second time at the disposition of the duke of France, who did not want it, since he found it much pleasanter to remain peacefully in real possession, pre-eminent as he was among the feudal lords, than to plunge himself into interminable controversies by placing on his head a crown which had become the target for so much contention. Rudolf's enemies, of whom we have mentioned but a small part, had much reason to support the duke in this resolution. Hugh now remembered that at the time of the fall of Charles the Simple the latter's wife Odgiwe had taken to England their son Louis, then a child, but now, after thirteen years of exile, entering upon his sixteenth year. Hugh congratulated himself on his great mind and went after him.

THE LAST CARLOVINGIANS (936–987 A.D.)

Louis IV, surnamed Louis d'Outre-Mer on account of his long sojourn on the other side of the Channel, occupied the throne eighteen years, but his reign was one long humiliation. Hugh exploited his generosity to the king, as Héribert had done about his treachery, and scarcely got him to the shores of France than he dragged him to the duchy of Burgundy and made Louis invest him with it; and moreover Louis had the chagrin of seeing that his act was useless. Hugh the Black, Rudolf's brother, bravely defended his heritage. The royal signature served nothing to the duke of France who, armed as he was, could only snatch a few shreds from the duchy of Burgundy. Thwarted in his ambition he turned to other things and demanded the county of Laon. Following Rudolf's example, Louis refused this demand, but for a still more powerful reason. The county of Laon was the sole domain left the crown through the usurpations of feudalism. Louis, who would have been nothing more than a stranger in his kingdom if this were taken from him, preferred a one-sided struggle. Fortunately for him, the emperor Otto came to his rescue, but not before he was besieged in his own city, and deserted by his most faithful partisans. The presence of the imperial army saved him from disaster, but Otto when he went home did not leave him any the stronger. Incapable of holding his own so close to the duke of France, Louis appeared before the people of Aquitaine, always favourably disposed towards the Carlovingian kings, since they had nothing to fear from them and had shown no more preference for the kingship of Duke Rudolf than they had for that of Count Eudes. Well received everywhere, Louis nevertheless encountered but a sterile compassion, and must have thought himself fortunate in that the duke of France, become more formidable than ever since the death of Héribert de Vermandois, was willing to await an occasion of revolt or rather of war.

Meanwhile William Longsword had met a tragic end, assassinated by Arnulf, count of Flanders, after an interview on one of the islands of the Somme, in December, 942. He left one son named Richard, only ten years old. The moment was now favourable for Louis to assert the royal authority, inactive in his hands. He appeared at once in Rouen, received the homage of the young Richard, and made himself the child's guardian. The people nearly besieged the house in which he lodged when they learned that he intended to take the boy back to Laon, but a few tactful words calmed everything. But once he had the young duke in his palace he used no more caution. The child, separated from all his Norman attendants, even from his tutor, found himself in truth a captive. The people who looked after him were severely reprimanded on one occasion for having taken him outside the city on a hunt for birds. Evidently the king's intention was to strengthen the royal crown by putting it under the protection of the ducal crown of Normandy. Osmond, Richard's tutor, cut this dream short by a bold stratagem. Disguised as a groom he managed to get near his pupil, enveloped him in a bale of hay, and carried him thus on his shoulders to the outskirts of Laon, where horses were waiting.



LOUIS IV
(From an old print)

Touched to the quick Louis d'Outre-Mer appealed to the ambition of Hugh of France and proposed to share Normandy with him if he would help get it back. Hugh agreed, but scarcely was Louis established in Normandy than he forgot his promises and sent the duke back to Paris. But the king paid dearly for this breach of faith. At news of the subjection with which their Neustrian brothers were threatened, the Northmen sent a large fleet under the command of Harold, the Dane. A battle took place on the banks of the Dive, not far from Rouen, in which the French were completely routed (945). Louis, wandering swordless through the country at the will of his horse, whose bridle had been cut by sword-blows, met a soldier from Rouen who, anxious for the king's safety, concealed him on an island in the Seine, where however he was discovered. The king's liberty was negotiated with great show by Hugh of France, who finally got him out of the Normans' hands. Great was the surprise when the end of this fine devotion became known. From his Norman prison Louis entered another which Hugh was determined he should not leave until he gave up the city and county of Laon. After this last misfortune Louis seemed less a king than a ruined lord. He filled the German court with his plaints, wrote to the pope, and summoned councils. Councils, pope, and emperor all failed before Hugh's will. Finally tired of the fight, and knowing well that Louis would be none the more formidable with it, Hugh gave the county back to the king, who did not enjoy it for long. Four years later, while pursuing a wolf on the road from Rheims to Laon, Louis' horse threw him and he died from the fall (954).

[948–980 A.D.]

Hugh had obtained a part of Burgundy on the return of Louis d'Outre-Mer; he now made use of the accession of Louis' son Lothair, to have Aquitaine given him. But this time again, the royal sanction was powerless. William, duke of Aquitaine, received the invader in arms, and the war lasted for two years, when the duke of France died. He had named two kings and permitted a third to reign. Hugh Capet, his eldest son, inherited the duchy of France, and at the same time his father's great influence, which he used in more moderate fashion.

He never came into hostility with Lothair throughout the latter's whole reign. He looked on quietly while the king was active in the east, west, and north, trying to get his hands on Normandy, seizing some territory from the count of Flanders, which he had to give back, and making military excursions into Lorraine as far as the borders of Germany. This fruitless activity, this restless desire to attempt hopeless conquests, was in singular contrast with Hugh Capet's power of repose. One would have said that the latter divined the future and that he disdained to forestall fortune by a single step in the belief of what would come to him.

In all this empty reign there is but one event that offers anything of interest. During an expedition in Lorraine (978), the principal object of his covetousness, Lothair came unexpectedly upon Aachen (Aix-la-Chapelle), where Otto II was then staying. The emperor was about to sit down to table when the arrival of the king of France forced him to flee, and Lothair ate the dinner prepared for Otto. Otto swore to sing to him beneath the walls of Paris such a Halleluiah as the king had never heard; and what seemed like an angry piece of bravado was really carried out. The emperor appeared with sixty thousand men upon the heights of Montmartre after having ravaged the country around Rheims, Laon, and Soissons, and caused to be intoned by a number of clerks the Halleluiah with which he had threatened Parisian ears, and in the chorus of which this whole army joined.[1] Paris was avenged for this din; for in crossing the Aisne, swollen by storms, on his return, Otto lost his booty, baggage, and all his rearguard (980). It is true that he carried away with him the remembrance of the most formidable psalmody of which history makes mention, and the honour of having planted his lance in one of the gates of Paris; but these were rather frivolous achievements for the son of Otto the Great, and his Halleluiah would certainly have produced much more effect had he taken his sixty thousand men to sing it at Rome.*f*

The campaign, however, was successful in having raised mutual disgust between Lothair and Hugh Capet, the latter finding himself exposed to incursions and ravage from the idle ambition and provocation of Lothair, who was unable to support him by any force; while Lothair, on his side, saw that Hugh merely protected his own territories, without caring for Laon or Lorraine. Lothair, therefore, became reconciled to Otto, held a meeting with him on the Maas, and, as the price of the emperor's friendship, waived his pretensions to Lorraine, at which his followers' hearts *corda Francorum*, says the Chronicle of St. Denis,*j* were much saddened. If the descendant of Charlemagne gave up his claims upon Lorraine to Otto, it was idle for Hugh Capet to remain in hostility with the German emperor. The latter, after his pacification with Lothair, had gone to Italy; thither Hugh Capet sent, proffering friendship and alliance with Otto. The reply was an invitation to the duke to visit the emperor in Italy: a request with which Hugh Capet

[1 It must be stated that this incident, though related by many historians, is based solely upon tradition.]

complied, to the great anxiety and suspicion of Lothair, who, according to Richer,[k] used every effort to have Hugh's return intercepted. The latter felt it necessary to pass the Alps in the disguise of a groom, and thus returned to his duchy.

Otto II expired in 983. Henry of Bavaria claimed the throne, setting aside the right of the future Otto III, a boy of but five years of age; and Lothair, alive to every opportunity of gaining Lorraine, leagued with Henry, and undertook an expedition to the Rhine. The people of the country were, however, hostile to him, and he retreated with some difficulty. In the following year he was more fortunate; aided by Héribert of Troyes, he succeeded in winning possession of the strong town of Verdun, from the walls of which he repelled all the efforts of the Lorraine chiefs to expel him. A gleam of prosperity thus shone upon Lothair, when death carried him off in 986. His eldest son, who had been crowned by anticipation several years previous, succeeded to the hopeful position of his father. Even Hugh Capet seemed inclined to restore his friendship and protection, as the first act of the young king was, in concert with the duke, to march to the reduction of the archiepiscopal town of Rheims.

It is considered by M. Thierry, who has been in general followed by modern French historians, that the principal cause which about this time led to the enthronement of Hugh Capet as king of France or of the French, in place of the Carlovingian princes, was the antipathy of race, and especially that of French against Germans, which prompted the chiefs and the population of the central provinces to throw off the yoke of the Germans, which the Lorraine or Belgian princes were to a certain degree. A study of the records and chronicles of the time does not lead to this conclusion. On the contrary, they prove beyond a question that the personages and the party which were most influential in awarding the crown definitively to Hugh Capet were precisely Belgian or Lorraine, and attached moreover to German interests.

Hitherto the Carlovingian princes had maintained their hold and influence in their own circumscribed territories by the support of the archiepiscopal church of Rheims, which maintained its jealousy both of the duke of Paris and of the German emperor, labouring at the same time to save and to recover its church property, as best it might, from the counts ever ready to despoil it.

Adalbero, son of Godfrey, count of the Ardennes, had been promoted to that see, and had laboured to reform and restore it. The prelate Adalbero was not what his predecessor had been, a devoted partisan of the Carlovingian princes. He saw that they were too weak to protect the church, especially that of Rheims, which, situated between the frontiers of two great nations, was continually the spoil of both. Adalbero, connected with all the German noblesse and princely families of Lorraine, was for preserving that province for the young emperor Otto; and his letters of exhortation written by Gerbert, addressed to all the prelates and counts of the border region, entreat them to resist all the efforts of Lothair and Louis, whilst recommending that they make a friend of Hugh, duke of France.

Policy so hostile to them on the part of the prelate of Rheims excited the inveterate enmity of the Carlovingian princes; and, at length, Louis marched to reduce Rheims with an army that Adalbero could not for the moment resist, for he gave hostages to answer for his conduct before an assembly that was to be convened. The prelate did this, apparently, in connivance with Hugh Capet, between whom and Adalbero there was in all probability an early agreement to aim at the setting aside of the Carlo-

[987 A.D.]

vingians, and the division between the German emperor and Hugh Capet of the countries between France and Lorraine. The great obstacle to the completion of such a scheme, young king Louis, was at this very time carried off.[g] As the result of a fall from a horse "he was seized with a great pain in his liver and a burning fever; much blood flowed from his nose and throat"; he died May 21st, 987. Such is the simple account of the contemporary, Richer.[k] But if Adhémar de Chabannes[l] and other more recent chroniclers are to be believed Louis died "the same death as his father, of a poisoned draught given by his wife." This more dramatic tradition has prevailed with the greatest number. The multitude were not willing to believe that so famous a dynasty could have come to an end by a burning fever or a commonplace accident. Both father and son died most opportunely for Hugh Capet, and what we know of the moral tone of that century allows us to suspect anything: but the testimony of Richer lends all the more weight to Hugh's justification, since the monk of Rheims is a partisan of the ancient dynasty and not of the Capets.[h]

The meeting of chiefs and prelates already summoned at Compiègne to hear Louis' accusation of Adalbero took place. But no accuser appeared. Charles the uncle of Louis held aloof. By his conduct as lord of Cambray, which dignity he had accepted under the suzerainty of the emperor, he had alienated the clergy, the French or Franci, both of Laon and of the duchy of France, as well as public opinion in general. He had made a lowly marriage, lived a dissipated life, and had, in fine, but few friends. Hugh Capet took upon himself to absolve Adalbero of the crime laid to his charge, that crime being treason to the Carlovingian family, which was then in the thoughts and purposes of all. It was, however, judged right to defer the final decision, and to appoint another meeting at Senlis, where, after due reflection and deliberation, a solemn resolve might be made. In the interval between the assemblies, Charles came to remonstrate with Adalbero. The prelate repelled him as one given to the worst vices and the worst associates. When the second meeting took place at Senlis, Adalbero represented Charles as unworthy of the crown, which he declared had never been hereditary. And no doubt Adalbero, as archbishop of Rheims, had in view the example of Hatto, archbishop of Mainz, who, on the extinction of the German Carlovingians, had rendered the crown of the empire elective, and attributed to the church and its metropolitan the chief influence in the election. Hugh Capet was therefore unanimously declared king in the midsummer of 987, and was solemnly crowned soon after at Noyon.[g]





CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CAPETIAN DYNASTY

[987–1180 A.D.]

THE period of 240 years — from the accession of Hugh Capet to that of St. Louis — is described by Sismondi as "a long interregnum, during which the authority of king was extinct, although the name continued to subsist." A history of France, during this period, is a history not of its monarch but of its nobles. And as yet these details are neither heroic nor important enough to be interesting. A duke had sprung up in Aquitaine, a king in Provence. The establishment of the Norman princes has already been narrated. Betwixt them and Aquitaine, Anjou obeyed a warlike count. To the north, the first Baldwin possessed the county of Flanders betwixt the Somme and the Maas. The duchy of Burgundy was formed in the east; whilst that of Lorraine was altogether independent of France, and held by tongue as well as régime to the empire of Germany. Taking away these provinces from the map of France, a central portion will be found to remain betwixt the Loire and the Flemish border. Even here, however, the last Carlovingians possessed scarcely a castle which they could call their own. The counts of Paris possessed that city, as well as Orleans. The counts of Vermandois, whose capital was St. Quentin, at this time ruled Champagne also; but soon after that province came to increase the territories of the counts of Blois. The only town that obeyed the last reigning descendants of Charlemagne was Laon, and here they usually resided, unless when obliged to take refuge at Rheims, under the protection of the archbishop, against the attacks of the surrounding nobles.

Charles of Lorraine, the uncle of Louis V and sole heir of the Carlovingians, though thus prevented of his rights, was neither friendless nor vanquished. He soon took forcible possession of Laon and of Rheims, from which Hugh Capet was unable to drive him by force of arms. He adroitly, however, contrived to attach to his interests Ascelin, bishop of Laon, whom Charles, somewhat mistrusting, kept with him at Rheims. A conspiracy, formed by Ascelin, was attended with complete success. Charles was seized in his bed, and, together with his nephew, the archbishop of Rheims, delivered over to

Hugh Capet. That monarch placed his prisoners in confinement at Orleans, where the competitor, Charles of Lorraine, soon after died (991).

These, if we except a long quarrel respecting the archbishopric of Rheims, are the sole events of the reign of Hugh Capet, which is supposed to have occupied nine years. Some modern historians regard the founder of the third dynasty of French monarchs as a hero and a master spirit, whose talents won for him a crown. Others, amongst whom is Sismondi,[i] represent him as a pious sluggard, indebted solely to fortune for his elevation. Both are in extreme. We see no proof of his heroism. But his was an iron age, in which the exertions of individuals had slight power in changing the course of events. Nor does it follow that, because he was pious, he was pusillanimous. He made war on the count of Montreuil, to recover the relics of St. Riquier, which that count had stolen. Hugh Capet compelled him to surrender them, and himself bore the memorable remains on his royal shoulders to the abbey of the saint. Such is the account of the chroniclers. But if we observe that Hugh at the same time built and fortified Abbeville, the monarch will not seem altogether sunk in the superstitious votary.



Robert II, King of France

"Who made thee count?" demanded Hugh Capet of a refractory noble, supposed by some to be Talleyrand, count of Angoulême. "The same right that made thee king," was the bold reply. Such was the measure of the new monarch's authority. The great feudatories, in consenting to place the crown on one of their own body, thought less of his elevation than of humbling the throne. Their views were sound, if they considered but themselves — short sighted, if they looked forward to posterity. Feudality ascended the throne with Hugh Capet; and, despite the precautions or intentions of the founders, the head of so powerful a system could not long remain powerless himself. Organised as society now was in regular and successive gradations of inferior and superior, a supreme chief became necessary to complete the whole. There was something wanting to crown the structure. The nobles imagined to adorn it with the lifeless image of royalty. But their statue, like Pygmalion's, took life as it became the object of veneration, and grew at length to wield its sceptre with a muscular arm.

Hugh Capet had taken the precaution to have his son crowned and consecrated during his own life-time. Thus, on the demise of the former, Robert II found himself the undisputed king of France. The young monarch was one of those soft, domestic tempers which fate so often misplaces on a throne. He had married Bertha, the widow of the count of Blois, and was tenderly attached to her. The spouses had the misfortune to be distantly related, and Robert had been godfather to one of Bertha's children by her former husband. The pope considered these circumstances sufficient to render the marriage incestuous; and he accordingly issued a command to Robert, desiring him to put away Bertha, under pain of excommunication. The popes had erected

themselves into the censors of princes, and they were especially rigid in prohibiting the marriage of cousins. Such unions, they said, drew down divine vengeance, and were to be avoided, lest they should produce national calamities. Nor was this mere superstition on their part: it had its policy. It was chiefly by intermarriages that the great aristocracy at this time increased their territories and influence. Every obstacle thrown in the way of these alliances consequently checked the growth of their exorbitant might; every difficulty or scruple, being in the power of the pontiff alone to remove, brought considerable advantage, both in revenue and respect, to the holy see. Robert struggled for four or five years in behalf of his legitimate wife, against the terrors of excommunication; but he was at length compelled to yield, to chase poor Bertha from his presence, and to take another wife, Constance, the daughter of the count of Toulouse. With her, a woman of more spirit than her predecessor, Robert was less happy. The monarch dreaded her, and was even obliged to do his alms in secret for fear of her reproof. His chief amusement was the singing and composing of psalms, to which the musical taste of that age was confined. In a pilgrimage to Rome, Robert left a sealed paper on the altar of the apostles. The priesthood expected it to contain a magnificent donation, and were not little surprised and disappointed to find it to contain but a hymn of the monarch's composition. The piety of Robert was most exemplary. He was anxious to save his subjects from the crime of perjury; the means he took were to abstract privately the holy relics from the cases which contained them, and on which people were sworn. He substituted an ostrich's egg, as an innocent object, incapable of taking vengeance on the false swearer.

Such are the facts which we have to relate of a reign of nearly thirty-five years. The good king Robert slumbered on his throne, with a want of vigour and capacity that would have caused a monarch of the first two races to totter from his seat, or at least would have transferred his authority to some minister or powerful duke. The Capetians as yet, however, unlike the Carlovingians, had neither power nor prerogative to tempt the ambition of a usurper. The very title of king was unenvied. And whilst the sovereign led the choir at St. Denis, France was not the less vigorously governed by its independent and feudal nobility. [b]

HENRY I (1031-1060 A.D.)

Robert's son and successor, Henry I, had first of all to sustain a family war against his mother, Constance, who put his young brother Robert on the throne. The church declared for Henry, and the famous Robert the Magnificent, more commonly known as Robert le Diable, duke of the Normans, lent him the support of his sword and secured the crown upon Henry's head. Henry vanquished his brother, pardoned and granted him the duchy of Burgundy, the first house of which was founded by Robert. During this reign a famine made terrible ravage among the French and in several places men ate one another. Following this scourge, troops of wolves devastated the country, and the lords, more terrible than wild beasts, carried on their barbaric wars in the midst of this widespread desolation.

The clergy with difficulty husbanded their anger in calling the vengeance of heaven upon this state of affairs and in affirming a multitude of miracles, and finally, in councils, ordered everyone to lay down his arms. They put forward the "Peace of God" in 1035, and threatened excommunication to those who violated so holy a decree. When the council in each province had



EXCOMMUNICATION OF ROBERT THE PIOUS

(From the painting by Jean Paul Laurens in the Museum of the Luxembourg, Paris)

formulated this peace deacons made it known to the people assembled in the churches. After the Gospel had been read the deacons mounted the pulpits and launched against infractors of the peace the following malediction: "Cursed be they who aid in doing evil; cursed be their arms and their horses! may they be banished with Cain, the fratricide, with Judas the traitor; with Dathan and Abiram, who descended living into hell. May their joy be extinguished at the sight of the holy angels as are these flames before your eyes." At these words the priests who were holding lighted tapers threw them down and put them out, while the people, seized with fear, repeated with one voice, "May God thus extinguish the joy of those who will not accept peace and justice."



HENRY I
(From an old engraving)

But passions were too rampant and ambitions, too indomitable for evil thus to be rooted out entirely. The Peace of God only multiplied perjurers without diminishing assassins. Five years later another law known as the "Truce of God" was substituted for it. The councils which proclaimed this did not try to stop the flow of all human passions but to control them and regulate war according to laws of honour and humanity. Recourse to force was no longer forbidden to those who could invoke no other law, but the employment of this means was submitted to wise restrictions. All military attack and all shedding of blood was forbidden from sunset Wednesday evening to sunrise Monday morning, as well as on all fast and feast days. A perpetual inviolability was accorded the churches, unarmed clerics, and monks, while the protection of the truce was extended to the peasants, their flocks, and implements of tillage. Promulgated first in Aquitaine, this wise and beneficial law was adopted throughout almost all Gaul, where the lords swore to observe it; and although it was often violated and soon fell into desuetude, it did much good in softening the manners of the nation and was the finest work of the mediæval clergy. Rumour spread that a horrible malady known as the "sacred fire" would punish infractors of the truce. The weakling king Henry, through "unreasonable pride," was almost the only one to refuse to recognise it within his estates, giving as a pretext that it was an encroachment of the clergy upon his authority.

This king has left no creditable impression upon history.[d] Save for a few expeditions into Normandy, most of which were unfortunate, he did nothing. In 1046 he refused the homage of the duke of Upper and Lower Lorraine, and even allowed the count of Flanders to declare for the emperor of Germany as suzerain.[c]

It is said that from fear of unwittingly marrying a wife who might be allied to him by ties of blood, he sought one at the extremities of Europe, and married for his third wife the princess Anne, daughter of the grand duke Yaroslaff of Russia. Henry had three sons by this marriage, of whom he caused the eldest, Philip, to be made joint king in the last year of his life. He died in 1060 after a reign of twenty-nine years.[d]

Deeds of the Great Barons

The king did nothing, but the great lords accomplished much. Three especially filled France with the noise of their ambitions and their wars. Robert, surnamed the Magnificent by the nobles and the Devil by the people, had usurped the ducal crown of Normandy by poisoning his brother Richard III and his chief barons at a feast (1028). By force of energy and courage he crushed the opposition which his crime aroused and, uncontested sovereign of Normandy, interfered with all his neighbours.

He upheld King Henry I against his brother, for which he received the French Vexin in return. He set out to oust Canute the Great from the throne of England for the profit of the sons of Ethelred, his cousin; but a storm having driven his fleet from the English coast upon that of Brittany, he invaded this country and forced the duke Alain to do him homage (1033). In 1035 struck with remorse he went to seek peace of conscience at Jerusalem. While returning he died in Asia Minor. Below Rouen, in one of the most beautiful positions in Normandy, you may see a hill covered with shapeless ruins. These are the remains of Robert le Diable's castle, which, according to tradition, was haunted by evil spirits. The place is not far from the spot where John Lackland is said to have stabbed his nephew.

The son and successor of Robert the Magnificent was William the Bastard, who had much to do to obtain the obedience of his vassals: the battle of Val-des-Dunes, near Caen (1046), finally rid him of his adversaries. King Henry, his suzerain, who fought that day on his side, soon found the young duke too powerful, and formed an alliance of all his enemies. This was the cause of numerous encounters between the Normans and the French (inhabitants of the Île-de-France), the latter in every event sustained by the Angevins and the Bretons. The bloodiest of these combats was that fought at Mortemer in 1054. The king supported by the count of Anjou had entered Normandy through the county of Évreux, while his brother Eudes penetrated the Pays de Caux with horsemen from Picardy, Champagne, and Burgundy.

Duke William met this double invasion with two armies — that which marched against Eudes encountered, near Mortemer, the French, dispersed, and engaged in pillaging. The Normans killed some, took others, and put the rest to flight. Swift messengers bore the good news to the duke. "When night had come he despatched one of his men who climbed a tree near the king's camp and began to utter loud cries. The sentinels asked why he thus cried aloud at an unseemly hour. 'My name is Raoul de Ternois,' he replied, 'and I bring you bad news. Take your wagons and carts to Mortemer to carry away your friends who are dead, for the French came against us to test the Normans' chivalry, and they have found it much greater than they liked. Eudes, their standard-bearer, has been put to flight in shame; and Guy, count of Ponthieu, has been taken. All the others have been made prisoners or are dead, or have had great difficulty in saving themselves by rapid flight. Announce at once this news to the king of the French, on the part of the duke of Normandy.'" The frightened king retired in all haste, and Geoffrey Martel was obliged to abandon to William the sovereignty of Maine.

Eudes II, count of Blois, desired to seize the kingdom of Provence and afterwards Lorraine, and to this reconstructed Lorraine he hoped to add the crown of Italy. But a battle in Barrois ended the schemes of the turbulent baron. Eudes was defeated and killed (1037); his wife alone was able to

recognise his body among the corpses which strewed the field, and pay the last honours to his remains.

A prince against whom Eudes often fought, Fulk (Foulques) Nerra — or the Black — count of Anjou, was even more renowned. Thrice did he make pilgrimages to the Holy Land. On the last he caused himself to be drawn on a sledge, naked, and with rope around the neck, through the streets of Jerusalem, whipped the while with great blows by two valets, and crying with all his might, "Lord have mercy on the traitor, the perjurer Fulk." Then he attempted to return on foot, but died on the way (1040). Fulk had indeed many crimes to expiate. Queen Constance was his niece. One day she complained to him of one of her husband's favourites, and Fulk immediately despatched twelve knights with orders to stab the favourite wherever they might find him. Of his two wives, he had one burned to death, or according to other accounts stabbed her himself after she had been rescued from a precipice over which he tried to throw her; the other he compelled by ill treatment to retire to Palestine. His son Geoffrey Martel was also a fighter. He tried by force of arms in 1036 to compel his father to cede him the county of Anjou, but the old Fulk defeated and made him undergo the punishment of the *harnescar*. The rebel son had to travel several miles on all fours, a saddle on his back, to reach the count's feet and implore his pardon.

Geoffrey Martel, jealous of the duke of Normandy's power, united with Henry I against him. His successors kept up this policy and the kings of France found the Angevin counts useful allies against the Norman duke — now become kings of England, at least until the moment the counts inherited the English crown themselves. It is related that Geoffrey Martel's wife was fond of reading, but such was the scarcity of books that she was obliged to give two hundred sheep, five quarters of wheat, and as much rye and millet for a manuscript of the homilies. The beautiful cathedral of Angers was begun under Fulk Nerra.[c]

PHILIP I (1060–1108 A.D.)

Philip I at the age of eight succeeded his father under the regency of Baldwin V, count of Flanders. The most important event of Philip's minority, and one in which he took no part, was the conquest of England. The Norman knights were distinguished above all others by their immoderate desire for warlike adventure and their brilliant exploits. Some of them, landing sixty years before as pilgrims on the south coast of Italy, had helped the besieged inhabitants of Salerno to drive off a Saracen army. Inspired by the success of their compatriots, the sons of a petty nobleman, Tancred de Hauteville, followed by a band of adventurers, wrested Apulia from the Greeks, Lombards, and Arabs, and sustained with success a most unequal struggle against the German and Byzantine emperors, who joined forces to exterminate them. They made prisoner the German pope Leo IX, devoted to the family of the emperor Henry III; and, humbling themselves before their captive, obtained permission to hold their conquest as a fief of the church. Robert Guiscard completed the subjection of Apulia and Calabria, and his brother Roger conquered Sicily, and it was thus the Normans founded the kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the pope obtained suzerainty over it.

Norman valour was the talk of Europe, when William the Bastard, son of Robert the Magnificent, began to assemble an army for the conquest of

England. Warriors, full of confidence in his destiny, rushed from all directions to his standard.[1] It was several hundred years since Britain had been conquered by the Saxons, and the country was now under the rule of King Harold, whom a storm had once wrecked, before he was king, upon the coast of Normandy. As William's prisoner, Harold was compelled to cede the Norman his rights to the throne; and when free at this price no longer considered himself bound by an oath extracted under compulsion. It was the custom in those days to consider shipwrecked persons as delivered by the judgment of God to the lord of the shore on which the storm had cast them. They could be held captive and even put to torture for the sake of ransom. William recalled to Harold his promise, especially invoked the will of Edward the Confessor, the last king of England, and declared his willingness to abide by the decision of the church. The consistory, assembled at the Lateran, pronounced in William's favour, and at the instigation of the monk Hildebrand awarded him the kingdom of England and sent him, together with a blessed standard, a diploma as sovereign of the country. A great battle fought between the two rivals near Hastings in 1066 decided the issue. Harold lost his life; and England, after a desperate struggle, became the conquest of the Normans. William divided the country into fiefs for his barons and knights, and thenceforth feudalism spread over England the network it had already fastened upon France, Germany, and Italy.



PHILIP I
(From an old French print)

This great event inflamed people's spirits and disposed them to adventurous expeditions in distant lands. It was the forerunner of the Crusades; although the latter had a nobler motive than the others, springing, as they did, from the enthusiasm of exalted piety.

A great revolution was taking place at this time in the church. Nicholas II occupied the pontifical chair at this moment. He had for counsellor a monk who deplored the vices of the clergy and the degradation of the church as much as the encroachments of the temporal upon spiritual authority. This monk, this man so celebrated in ecclesiastical history, was Hildebrand. He resolved to deprive the princes and lords of every source of influence over the clergy, to strengthen the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and to raise the pope above the kings of the earth, hoping thus to regain for the church her virtue, her splendour, and all her power. Such a project of universal domination, which would seem like madness to-day, was in Hildebrand's age a conception of genius. It was Hildebrand's glory to have wished to free the church's spiritual authority from all temporal bonds; it

[1 Contemporaries assign very varied and incoherent numbers for the size of William's army. One of them, Hugues de Fleury, estimates it at 150,000 men. Modern historians have cut this down to about 60,000, which is still regarded by some as too high.]

was his mistake to have listened too much to his own ambition in trying to enslave the political government of the princes to ecclesiastical authority. In 1073 Hildebrand was chosen by the people and clergy of Rome as successor to Pope Alexander II. He took the name of Gregory VII.

Philip of France was leading a life filled with scandal and violence. To satisfy his unbridled desires he, like Henry IV of Germany, was carrying on, in contempt of Gregory's prohibition, the most shameful traffic in clerical benefices. The angered pontiff threatened Philip with excommunication. The colossal structure raised by the pontiff did not perish with him; his successors bound it together. He founded the universal monarchy of the popes upon a durable basis and on the ruling spirit of the time, and this domination reached a century after him, its highest point. The Crusades contributed powerfully to hold it together. Gregory conceived the plan of these, but it was not given to him to carry it out. The first of these memorable events took place in the time of Philip I and in the pontificate of Urban II. Philip was not associated with the First Crusade; he took no part in any of the great enterprises which marked the age in which he lived, and his reign offers nothing worthy of remembrance.

In 1071 the widow of his guardian, Count Baldwin of Flanders, was robbed by the latter's brother, Robert the Frisian, and she had recourse to Philip. The king took up arms in her behalf and marched against Robert, but suffered a shameful defeat at Cassel.[1] He also fought a twelve years' war with William the Conqueror, but it was a war marked by no memorable event. William seduced Philip's counsellors and partisans by offering them great domains in England. Philip on his side promised protection to the discontented element among the Normans and took the part of William's eldest son Robert, in revolt against his father. After a truce and during an illness of the duke, the king made fun of the former's extreme fatness by inquiring when he expected to be brought to bed. William heard of this and, furious, swore to bring the king the candles for the churching. He assembled a formidable army and was setting out to ravage Philip's estates when he fell ill at Rouen and died there in 1087. When he was scarcely cold the lords who were with him departed in haste for their castles; his servants pillaged his effects, taking everything but the bed he lay on, and left the body of the conqueror naked on the mattress. A poor knight found it in this state and moved to pity covered it, at his own expense, with mourning robes and prepared to bury it. He had spoken the funeral service and the body was in the grave when a Norman named Asselin came forward and said, "This ground belongs to me; the man whose eulogy you have just pronounced robbed me of it. On this spot stood my father's house, this man seized it against all justice and without paying a price for it. In God's name I forbid you to cover the robber's body with earth that is mine." This is a memorable example of the vanity of an existence full of greatness and iniquity — a striking sign of the forerunner of the judgment which threatened, on the threshold of the other life, him who had founded his power on rapine and the extermination and misery of a people. This William, conqueror of a great realm and ravisher of immense domains in a foreign land, only obtained a resting-place in his native soil through pity; those who assisted at his funeral had to lay the price of it upon his coffin.

None of his three sons paid him his last duties, but waged fierce war for his heritage.[d] William Rufus succeeded to the throne in England, and his

[1 The trouble with Robert did not end until 1076, when a treaty was made and the king received the homage of Flanders.]

[illegible] Philippe, [illegible] Normandy [illegible] Robert [illegible] Normandy [illegible] Robert [illegible] Maine. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

of commerce and the annoyance of the townsfolk. Louis here took care to have a pretext also. He did not assert his royal authority and arm to avenge it. It was as the ally of the clergy that he subdued the Montmorencys; it was as the friend of commerce, and the avenger of the plundered burgesses, that he besieged Montlhéry. Louis XI did not use more policy and feint in his undermining of the aristocracy than did Louis VI; the latter, unfortunately for his own fame, having only the smaller sphere of action (1101).

Nevertheless, the name of Louis the Fat stands connected with one of the most important revolutions in the civil history of France, *viz.*, the enfranchisement of the *communes* or commons, as the early municipalities were called. From him towns received their first charters; from his reign their first liberties date. In some towns the bishops favoured, in some they opposed, the enfranchisement of the commons. The barons were, in general, averse. The king was obliged to wage a tedious war against the family of Coucy, which, by means of a fortress, kept possession of the town of Amiens. He at length took and razed it; and the seigniory of the De Coucys merged in the township of Amiens.



LOUIS VI
(From an old engraving)

It was not merely by military exploits, and by the elevation of the *tiers état* or third estate, that the royal authority progressed during the reign of Louis VI. The judicial authority attributed to the monarch by the feudal system, and exercised by him in his court or council of peers, made him the arbiter of disputed successions. It was thus that Philip I had extended his influence over the province of Berri. His son Louis interfered in the quarrels of the house of Bourbon, where a minor struggled against the usurpation of his uncle. Louis entered the Bourbonnais with an army in 1115, took Germigny, the principal fortress of Aymon de Bourbon, and compelled him to submit. Not since the early Carlovingians had the banners of a king of France been seen so far from his capital.

The continued rivalry betwixt the Normans, or English, and the French excited and kept alive the warlike spirit of both nations. Henry I reigned in England, and also in Normandy, which he had usurped from his brother Robert. Louis took the part of the latter, as well as of his son William Clito; and mutual wars, or rather ravages, were frequent, with intervals of peace, betwixt the nations.[b] The principal feud between Henry and Louis was produced by accident.

Battle of Brenneville

On the 20th of August, 1119, Louis and Henry found themselves unexpectedly face to face on the plain of Brenmule or Brenneville, three leagues from Les Andelys. Henry descended from the height of Verclive with his

sons Richard and Robert, five hundred men-at-arms, and some infantry. Louis, seeing that what he had long desired was now approaching, marched straight at the enemy at the head of four hundred knights, accompanied by William Clito, who had taken arms to deliver his father from a long captivity and to win back the heritage of his ancestors. William de Crespigny, a Norman knight on Clito's side, charged first with eighty men-at-arms, penetrated as far as King Henry himself, and smote him such a blow on the head as, but for his cap of mail, must have split his skull; but Crespigny was instantly thrown from his horse and made prisoner with most of his followers. The knights of the Vexin and the rest of the French then fell impetuously on the Anglo-Normans, and at first caused them to give way, but Henry's soldiers, closing up their ranks, pressed between them and overthrew the assailants, who were thrown into disorder by the sheer force of their charge. King Louis, seeing his followers in disarray and anxious to effect a retreat in order to avoid an irreparable loss, fled at full gallop, leaving his royal banner and 140 of his knights in the hands of the conquerors.

"Of nine hundred knights who were present at this battle," says Ordericus Vitalis,[g] "there were only three killed; for they were completely cased in iron and, moreover, mutually sparing one another as much from the fear of God as for the sake of brotherhood in arms. They concerned themselves less to kill the flying than to take them prisoners."

The king of the French, divided from his companions in his fright, lost his way in a forest (that of Lyons) where a peasant, who did not know him, guided him to Les Andelys in the hope of a large reward. King Henry bought the silver standard of Louis for forty marks from a man-at-arms, who had seized it and kept it as a witness of his victory; but the next day he sent back to King Louis his horse with its saddle, its rein, and all the royal trappings (Louis had apparently changed horses that he might fly without being recognised). And William Ætheling had sent back to his cousin, William Clito, the palfrey which the latter had lost in the battle, with other presents which King Henry had thought needful for an exile.[e] After this defeat Louis had to abandon William Clito's cause. Pope Calixtus II arranged a peace and Henry I embarked for England with his family and his court. The journey is memorable for the loss of the "White Ship" (*Blanche Nef*) in which the most renowned knights and the heirs of the most illustrious house of the Norman race, including the two sons and a daughter of the king, perished. One child alone remained to the bereaved monarch, Matilda or Maud, the wife of the emperor Henry V but afterwards married to Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou.[a]

Another enterprise of Louis, in the year 1121, marks the rapid increase of the king's influence. A few years since he had established his authority in the Bourbonnais: now he extended it to Auvergne. In a quarrel betwixt the count and the bishop of Clermont, the latter appealed to Louis, who summoned the count to his supreme court, and, on his refusal to appear, marched with an army and subdued him, as he had previously the lord of Bourbon. The counts of Anjou and of Nevers aided him in the expedition. They felt no reluctance in carrying into effect the decrees of that court of peers of which they formed a part. Louis was not so fortunate in his treatment of Flanders as in his subjugation of Aquitaine. The Flemings, indeed, proved always intractable to French treatment whether of amity or hostility. The count of that province, perplexed and curbed by the frowardness of the townsfolk and the middle class, sought to taunt the family of Van der Straten by asserting they were serfs. One of them replied by cleaving the young

count's skull as he knelt at prayers. There being no heir to the family of Flanders, Louis sought to give the county to William Clito (1127). This unfortunate prince soon after fell in an engagement; and Flanders passed to Theodoric of Alsace, a descendant of Robert the Frisian (1129). Louis VI died in 1137. It is strange that history could find for this monarch no epithet save that of the Fat, at the same time that it records innumerable proofs of a talented mind, of an active and enterprising spirit.

Towards the conclusion of this monarch's reign, fortune came to reward and crown his efforts for the extension of the royal authority. William, count of Poitiers, about to undertake a pilgrimage, from which he had the presentiment that he never should return, offered his daughter Eleanor in marriage to Louis the Young, son of Louis the Fat. She was the heiress of her father's possessions, which surpassed in extent and importance those of the king of France himself, comprising Guienne and Poitou — all the country, in fact, betwixt the Loire and the Adour. The marriage was celebrated at Bordeaux; and soon after it arrived tidings of the deaths both of the king and of the count of Poitiers. Thus Louis VII, or the Young, succeeded to dominions and authority infinitely more ample than those which his father had inherited. But the want of talent in the son did away with all these advantages. Nevertheless he commenced his reign with spirit. He chastised several refractory nobles, and resolved to support the queen's rights to the county of Toulouse. Louis besieged that town. He failed in taking it, indeed; but the king of France, at the head of an army, made his name and power known for the first time to the inhabitants of the south. During a war carried on about the same time against Thibaut, count of Champagne, an accident occurred which had a marked effect upon the future conduct and character of Louis the Young. He had taken by storm the castle of Vitry, and set fire to it. The flames chanced to catch the neighbouring church, into which the population had crowded, to preserve themselves from the fury of the soldiery. It appears that they had no means of escape. Thirteen hundred men, women, and children perished in the conflagration. Louis was horror-struck on beholding the mass of half consumed bodies, and the weight of the remorse hung ever after upon him, and weighed down his spirit. It was the chief cause that induced him to receive the cross, and to lead that expedition to Jerusalem which is known in history as the Second Crusade.



LOUIS VII

Not a single feat of arms marked the stay of Louis in Palestine, where he lingered till 1149, ashamed to return. The ignominy of this ill success, and the desertion of his followers, fell upon King Louis; and he felt it, not to rally and redeem his character, but to sink under the shame. He abandoned the feelings of the monarch and the warrior for those of the pilgrim; refused at first to undertake any enterprise against the infidels, and stole from Antioch to Jerusalem like a craven. If his subjects were discontented with such

weakness in their sovereign, Eleanor of Aquitaine was still more disgusted with such a husband: she refused longer to remain on any friendly terms with him.[b] On his return the king repudiated his wife, who had so displeased him during the crusade. [Queen Eleanor at once petitioned the pope for a divorce. In 1152 the pope granted her wish.] Shortly afterwards a new marriage transferred her duchy of Guienne to Henry Plantagenet, count of Anjou, duke of Normandy and heir to the English crown. When, two years later, Henry entered into possession of his heritage, and afterwards added Brittany, through the marriage of one of his sons with the only daughter of the count of that country, he found himself master of almost the whole of western France.[c]

Hence dates the rivalry betwixt the kings which fills up the rest of their reigns. But in that age war tended more to mutual annoyance than to conquest: it was a livelihood to the needy, a portion to the powerful; and neither were very serious or bent upon the destruction of an enemy. Feudal rights and supremacy were also held in high respect; and the name of suzerain, though but a name, often supplied to Louis the place of the armies of his vassal Henry. In time the church came to fling itself into the scale. The persecution and murder of Thomas à Becket roused all the clergy in enmity to Henry, and Louis took advantage of their aid. Later still, the French monarch used the more unworthy expedient of exciting the sons of Henry to rebel against their parent; and throughout he contrived to supply by intrigue what he wanted in martial spirit, activity, and power. Louis VII married Alix of Champagne, after the divorce; he was long without a son, and at length, so the story goes, he obtained one by dint of prayer. When the life of the prince was threatened by a fever, the anxious parent undertook a pilgrimage to Canterbury, to the tomb of Thomas à Becket, for his recovery. The young Philip recovered; but Louis, on his return, was struck with a palsy, under which he lingered for the space of a year, and died in 1180.[b]

The Abbot Suger

On his return from the crusade, Louis found his country in a most peaceful and flourishing condition owing to the skilful administration of his preceptor the abbot Suger, whom he had left in charge of affairs.[a] Suger is indubitably the most illustrious, perhaps, even, the only historian who has a place in the general history of France, and who really influenced her destinies. Such a fame cannot be usurped; whoso possesses it merits it.

No great and lasting memorials were raised in France by Suger and his master, Louis the Fat; they made no great conquests, established no memorable laws; it is even a mistake to ascribe to them the honour of being the first to enfranchise the communes. This enfranchisement had preceded them; it arose from causes beyond their control, fulfilled its destiny without their aid, and was as often opposed as seconded by them. But Louis the Fat and Suger, the one as king, the other as minister, were the first since Charlemagne to have a true and just perception of their position and mission, and to bind themselves to act upon it. This great idea, without which there can be nothing of state or king, the idea of a public authority, devoted to the maintenance of public order, called to something higher than ministration to the interests and personal caprices of its temporary holder, had been conceived by the giant mind of Charlemagne, but, despite his genius and a long reign, it was not for him to put it into action, to found a throne and a nation. Certain customs of unity, of regularity, of govern-

ment, in short, existed indeed in the earlier years of Louis le Débonnaire's reign, but they soon vanished, society and authority alike fell into decay, and for two centuries there was neither king, kingdom, nor nation, Frank nor French.

Hugh Capet, in taking the title of king, laid the first stone of a new monarchy in the very heart of feudalism. But it was no more than a title of vague meaning and no import under him. He had not the force of character, nor is there anything to indicate that he had the design, to raise the sovereignty above suzerainty and reunite in one body the scattered members of the nation. Under his immediate successors the power of the throne drooped more and more. In the reigns of Robert, Henry I, and Philip I, one can scarcely discern any traces of national and monarchical unity. Isolation and independence waxed stronger, not only in the case of powerful or distant feudatories, but also among the nearest and humblest vassals of the crown. Only the feudal tie continued in force, a real and precious tie since it still maintained a show of confederation under a leader and prevented the utter dismemberment of the government and the country; but its influence, always more moral than political, yielded at the least shock and seemed even on the point of disappearance. With Louis the Fat a new era begins; the extent of his power, even the sphere of his activities, is still very restricted; the results of his endeavours are, for the present at least, of little value. It is almost always in the outskirts of Paris, against the simple squires, for the securing of a route, for the protection of merchants, that his courage and wisdom are exercised. Nevertheless in these small undertakings, and in certain others more remote, we can see a definite design of central and regular government; sovereignty separates itself from suzerainty, and in its own name claims, though timidly, rights of another sort. It presents itself to us as a power general and superior, called to maintain justice and order, to the advantage of all, and against all comers — a power all too weak for such a task, but awake to a perception of its dignity and its mission, and to a dawning of the same in the mind of its subjects. Such is the true character of the reign of Louis the Fat; he did little for the liberties of the public, much for the forming of the state and national government. He guided sovereignty in its first steps out of a feudal régime, gave to it other principles, placed it in a different attitude; and it is in this work, the development of which decided the lot of France, that Suger rendered powerful assistance during twenty five years' administration.

He did not seem marked out by birth for so great things, his father, Hélinand, being only a man of the people, living, according to the most probable supposition, at St. Omer, where Suger was born in 1081. But even at that date the church busied herself in searching out and welcoming, even from among the lowest ranks, men capable of serving and honouring her. Everywhere present and active, in touch with all the social conditions, associating alike with poor and rich, dwelling with the humble as with the great, she went forward to meet even childhood on its way, studying its varying dispositions, surrounding its earliest days, unfolding to it a brilliant career, the only one which invited development of its intellectual faculties, in which every reward was accessible to merit, and, finally, in which principles of equality and co-operation reigned. The monastery of St. Denis received and brought up the young Suger; he passed ten years in the dependent priory of Lettrée, and when, in 1095, Philip intrusted the education of his son, Louis the Fat, to the monks of St. Denis, Abbot Adam recalled Suger into the abbey itself that he might become the companion of

the young prince. Thus sprang up between the children the intimacy which was to bind them together all their lives. In 1098, Louis returned to his father's house, and Suger went to complete his studies in the monastery of Florent-de-Saumur, where the sciences of the day flourished under Abbot William. In returning to St. Denis in 1103 he speedily became the confidant of Abbot Adam, who, not content with employing him in all matters relating to the monastery, frequently took him to court where Prince Louis, who now for four years had had a share in the throne, knit yet more closely the bonds that had bound him to his childhood's friend. From this date there is no further need to trace the life of Suger; it is part of history and nearly all the details that have come down to us are to be found either in his *Vie de Louis VI^k* or in the *Panegyric* written upon him by the monk William, his secretary.

Before his elevation to the dignity of abbot of St. Denis, when charged with diverse missions either to ecclesiastical gatherings or to the court at Rome, or even called upon to defend with mailed fist certain domains belonging to St. Denis against the brigand nobles who ravaged them, he displayed in turn the tact of the ecclesiastic and the courage of the knight. Later on, when Louis had constituted him his most intimate adviser, it seems that so much power temporarily dazzled Suger. St. Bernard speaks of his pomp and pride, and of the disorder introduced into his abbey. "The interior of the monastery," he says, "is filled with knights, sometimes it is even open to women; one hears business of all sorts being transacted there; there quarrels break out; lastly it is there that that which is Cæsar's is rendered unto Cæsar, without deduction or delay, but never unto God that which is God's." Whether it be that St. Bernard's warnings aroused Suger from this first intoxication of power, or whether he perceived of himself the harm the scandal would do him, he did not delay putting an end to it. In 1127 he introduced drastic reforms into his abbey, compelled his monks to submit to them, and scrupulously conformed himself, and very shortly his power in the court was but more firmly established by this episode. Proud of the austerity of his morals, whilst at the same time profiting by his influence, the church cried him up on all occasions, and bishops and abbots of the most celebrated monasteries contemplated with equal pride the gorgeous church rebuilt by him at St. Denis, and the humble cell, barely fifteen feet long by ten feet wide, where he applied himself in solitude to religious exercises. After the death of Louis the Fat his power increased yet more; the indolent and incompetent Louis the Young shifting to his shoulders the whole weight of the government.

Suger's regency during this king's crusade, from the year 1147 to the year 1149, is the most brilliant period of his career. He firmly upheld the royal authority, rebuked the usurpations of the vassals, established some degree of order wherever his influence attained to, met the king's expenses in Palestine by his excellent administration of the crown revenues, and the advancement of his domains, and, finally, won such fame throughout the length and breadth of Europe that persons from Italy and England came to study the salutary results of his government, and the title of "the Solomon of the century" was bestowed upon him by foreigners contemporary with him. Hitherto only illustrious bishops, or learned and subtle theologians had attained this European distinction by their authority in the church or by their writings; no other man had ever won it on the sole merit of his political conduct, and from the ninth to the twelfth century Suger remains the first example of a minister who won admiration for his skill and

wisdom from beyond the mountains and over the seas. He did not show any anxiety to retain this absolute power which the king's absence conferred on him, and, by a rare unselfishness, the interests of the state preoccupied him more than his personal ambitions. He was himself opposed to a crusade from which he foresaw dangers, and had only yielded at the instance of St. Bernard's ardent entreaties, the pope's orders, and the prevailing opinion of the day. When certain of the nobles, Robert de Dreux, his brother, among them, who had accompanied Louis, abandoned him in Palestine and returned without him to France, Suger never ceased from urging his immediate return to his dominions.

"The disturbers of the public peace," he wrote, "have returned, whilst you, under bond to defend your subjects, remain as it were captive in a foreign land. Of what are you thinking, sire, thus to leave the flock intrusted to you at the mercy of the wolves? How can you disguise from yourself the perils with which the robbers who have outstripped you menace the state? No, it is not permissible for you to remain any longer so far away from us. Everything here craves your presence. Therefore we pray your highness, we exhort your piety, we call upon your goodness of heart, finally we conjure you by the faith which binds reciprocally prince and subject, not to prolong beyond Easter your sojourn in Syria, lest a longer delay render you guilty in the eyes of the Lord of disregarding the oath which you swore on assuming the crown. You will, I think, find cause for contentment in our conduct. We have placed in the hands of the knights Templar the money which we had intended to send you. We have further repaid to the count of Vermandois the £3,000 which he had lent us for your use. At the present time your land and your people enjoy a happy peace. We lay in store against your return the broken victuals for the fiefs dependent on you, the tallage and victuals which we levy from your domains. You will find your houses and palaces in good preservation owing to the care we have taken in doing repairs. I have now reached the decline of life, but I dare venture to say that the works I engaged to do from love to God and devotion to your person have hastened my old age. With regard to the queen, your wife, I advise that you conceal the dissatisfaction she causes you till such time as, restored to your realm, you can quietly deliberate over that and other matters."



AN OFFICER OF THE KING, TWELFTH CENTURY

Louis kept them waiting for him yet a long time. Suger had to fight against the pretensions and plottings of Robert de Dreux and his party. He realised that single-handed he would not be able to hold his own, and boldly summoned to Soissons an assembly of the bishops and principal barons of the realm. This generous appeal to the opinions and the liberties of the times had the result he anticipated: the assembly sided with him and strengthened him against his enemies. Defeated in their purpose in France, they made

an attack on him in Palestine, this time within the mind of the king himself, who, frivolous and credulous, at first believed all their accusations. But on passing through Italy on his return to his dominions Louis received through Pope Eugenius III, friend and admirer of Suger, a completely different impression, in which he was fully confirmed on arriving in France by the good order which he there found established, the resources husbanded for him by Suger, and the eagerness shown by the regent to hand over to the king his rightful authority.

Other ideas were at work in the old man's brain. He had disapproved of his master's crusade as fatal to the interests of the kingdom; but the misfortunes to the Christians in the East, and regret at seeing the Holy Land on the point of once more falling into the hands of the infidels, preoccupied his mind continually. He conceived the idea of himself attempting a fresh expedition to Palestine, of raising an army at his own expense, of devoting all his wealth and influence to the cause, of inducing the leading bishops to follow his example, and of personally heading an undertaking by which he hoped Jerusalem would be saved without imperilling France and his king. In the narrative of William, his biographer, we can see with what ardour and perseverance he threw himself into this project, even after illness forbade him to hope for the glory resulting from it. He had already chosen the leader whom he deemed most competent to replace him and had presented him with the sums of money collected for carrying out the scheme, when death overtook him, January 12th, 1151, at the age of seventy.[h]

EMANCIPATORY MOVEMENTS AFTER THE CRUSADES

The grand movement of the crusade having for a while withdrawn men from local servitude, and led them abroad through Europe and Asia, they sought Jerusalem and found freedom. That liberating trumpet of the archangel, which was thought to have been heard in the year 1000, sounded a century later in the preaching of the crusade. The village awoke at the foot of the feudal castle, whose shade hung heavy over it. The pitiless man who descended from his vulture's eyrie only to despoil his vassals, now himself armed them, led them, lived with them, suffered with them. Communion in misery softened his heart. Many a serf could say to the baron, "My lord, I found you a draft of water in the desert; I shielded you with my body at the siege of Antioch, or Jerusalem."

The Communes

Humanity, then, began again to honour itself, even in its most miserable conditions. The first communal revolutions preceded, or closely followed, the year 1100. They began to think that every man was entitled to dispose of the fruits of his own labour, and to give away his own children in marriage; they emboldened themselves to think that they had a right to come and go, to buy and sell, and they suspected, in their presumption, that it might very possibly be that men were equal.

Until then, that formidable thought of equality had not come forth in a very precise and tangible form. We are told, indeed, that the peasants of Normandy revolted in the year 1000, but they were easily put down; a few knights ravaged the country, dispersed the villeins, cut off their feet and hands, and there was an end of the matter. The peasants, in general, were too much isolated from each other; their *jacqueries* were always unsuc-

cessful throughout the Middle Ages. Unhappily, too, it must be owned, they were too degraded by slavery, too brutalised by the excess of their woes; their triumph would have been that of barbarism. It was especially in the populous boroughs, grouped round the castles, and, above all, round the churches, that ideas of emancipation fermented. The lay, or ecclesiastical lords had encouraged the population of those boroughs by concessions of land, being desirous of augmenting their own strength and the number of their vassals. These towns were not large and commercial cities, like those of the south of France and Italy, but they had some rude branches of trade, some blacksmiths, many weavers, butchers, and innkeepers, in the towns of transit. Sometimes the lords invited skilful workmen to settle in their towns, such, at least, as could embroider a stole, or forge armour; it was absolutely necessary to leave those men a little liberty, for, otherwise, as they carried their all in their hands, they would have left the country.

The growth of freedom, then, was destined to commence by the central towns of France, which, obtaining their franchises by fair means or by force, received the name of privileged towns, or communes. The occasion of this result was, generally, the defence made by the inhabitants against the oppression and robbery of the feudal lords, and, in particular, the defence of the Île-de-France against Normandy, the feudal country *par excellence*. "At this period," says Ordericus Vitalis,[9] "popular communality was established by the bishops in such wise that the priests accompanied the king to siege or battle, with the banners of their parishes and all their parishioners." According to the same historian, it was a Montfort (an illustrious family, which was, in the following century, to destroy the liberties of the south of France, and to lay the foundation of those of England), it was Amaury de Montfort, who advised Louis the Fat, after his defeat at Brenneville, to employ against the Normans the men of the communes, marching under the banners of their parishes (1119). But when these communes returned within their own walls, they became more urgent in their demands; it was a mortal blow to their humility, to have once seen the great war-steeds and the noble knights flying before their parochial banners; to have put an end, with Louis the Fat, to the highway robberies of the Rocheforts; to have harried the lair of the De Coucys. They said, with the poet of the twelfth century: "We are men as well as they; our hearts are as great; we are as capable of endurance as they." They all wanted some franchise, some privilege, and for this they offered money — which they contrived to find, indigent and wretched as they were. Poor artisans, blacksmiths, or weavers, allowed, as a matter of favour, to set themselves down at the foot of a castle; fugitive serfs, who had taken refuge round a church, such were the founders of liberty; they stinted themselves of bread to obtain them, and the lords and the king were eager to sell diplomas so well paid for.

This revolution was accomplished everywhere, under a thousand forms, and with little noise; it was only prominently remarked in some towns of Oise and Somme, which, being placed in less favourable circumstances, divided between two lords, lay and ecclesiastical, applied to the king to obtain a solemn guarantee for concessions often violated, and which maintained a precarious liberty at the cost of many centuries of civil war. It was upon these towns that the name of "communes" was more particularly bestowed. These wars are a small, but dramatic incident in the great revolution which was taking place silently, and under various forms, in all the towns of the north of France.

It was in the valiant and choleric Picardy, the communes of which had so well beaten the Normans; it was in the country of Calvin, and so many

other revolutionary spirits, that these explosions took place.[f] Le Mans in 1066, then Cambray in 1076, gave the signal, followed by Noyon, Beauvais, St. Quentin, Laon, Amiens and Soissons. All wrested communal charters from their lords, mostly of the ecclesiastical order. In 1112 the bishop of Laon attempted to repeal the communal charter he had granted, somewhat under compulsion, three years before. His house was surrounded; the nobles who came to his assistance were killed, and the prelate himself fell under the blows of an axe. The king came and the commune was abolished. But before sixteen years had passed the communal party regained the ascendancy. In 1128 the king ratified a new charter granted by the bishop.[c] Great or small, the Picard communes were heroic, and bravely did they fight. They too had their belfry, their tower, not inclined and faced with marble, like the *miranda* of Italy, but furnished with a sonorous bell, that summoned the citizens, not in vain, to battle against the bishop or the lord. Women went forth to these fights, against men. Eighty women insisted on taking part in the attack upon the castle of Amiens, and were wounded there.

So, likewise, Joan Hachette fought afterwards, at the siege of Beauvais. A sprightly and laughter-loving population it was, of impetuous soldiers and merry story-tellers, a country of light manners, of smutty *fabliaux*, of good songs. It was their delight, in the twelfth century, to see the count of Amiens, mounted upon his big horse, venturing beyond the pont-levis, and caracoling clumsily; thereupon the innkeepers and the butchers planted themselves boldly at their doors, and startled the feudal animal with their loud laughter.

It has been said that the king founded the communes, but the reverse is, rather, the fact — it was the communes that founded the king; without them he could not have repulsed the Normans. Those conquerors of England and of the Two Sicilies would, probably, have conquered France; it was the communes, or, to employ a more general and more exact word, it was the *bourgeoisies* which, under the banner of the parish saint, achieved the security of public peace between the Oise and the Loire; and the king, mounted on horseback, carried the banner of the abbey of St. Denis, at the head of the lords. A vassal, as count of Vexin, abbot of St. Martin de Tours, canon of St. Quentin, defender of the churches, he waged holy war against the brigandage of the lords of Montmorency and Puiset, and against the execrable ferocity of the Coucys. He had upon his side the nascent *bourgeoisie* and the church; feudalism had had all the rest, all the strength and the glory; the poor helpless king was smothered between the vast dominations of his vassals.

Philosophy and Thought; Abelard and St. Bernard

The chain of free-thinkers, broken, it would seem, after Johannes Scotus, had its links reunited by the great Gerbert, who became pope in the year 1000. Educated at Cordova, and admitted a master at Rheims, Gerbert had for disciple Fulbert of Chartres, whose pupil Bérenger [Berengarius] of Tours affrighted the church by the first doubt cast upon the Eucharist. Soon after, the canon Rosselin of Compiègne dared to touch upon the question of the Trinity. He taught, moreover, that general ideas were but words: "The virtuous man is a reality: virtue is but a sound." This bold reform gave a violent shock to all poetry, to all religion; it accustomed men to see nothing but personifications in those ideas that had been regarded as real things; it was nothing less than a transition from poetry to prose.

This logical heresy inspired the contemporaries of the First Crusade with horror; nominalism, as it was called, was stifled for a while.

Champions were not wanting to the church against the innovators. The Lombards, Lanfranc and St. Anselm, both of them archbishops of Canterbury, combated Bérenger and Rosselin. St. Anselm, an original genius, anticipated the famous argument of Descartes, for the existence of God: "If God did not exist, I could not conceive him." It was a great delight for him to have made this discovery, after a long fit of sleeplessness. Another conflict of an intellectual kind, and one of a much graver nature, was about to begin, so soon as the question should have come down from politics to theology and morals, and the very morality of Christianity should have been brought in question. Thus, Pelagius came after Arius, and Abelard after Bérenger.

The church seemed at peace; the school of Laon and that of Paris were occupied by two pupils of St. Anselm of Canterbury, Anselm of Laon, and William of Champeaux. Great signs and tokens, however, were appearing; the Vaudois had translated the Bible into the vulgar tongue; the *Institutes* were also translated, and law was taught, simultaneously with theology, at Orleans and at Angers. The mere existence of the school of Paris was an immense innovation and danger. The ideas which, till then, had been dispersed, and exposed to close inspection in the various ecclesiastical schools, were about to converge to a centre. The conquests of the Normans and the First Crusade had carried that potent philosophic idiom everywhere — into England, into Sicily, into Jerusalem. This circumstance alone gave France, especially central France and Paris, an immense attractive force. The French of Paris became gradually proverbial; feudalism had found its political centre in the royal city, and that city was now about to become the capital of human thought.

He who began this revolution was not a priest; he was a handsome young man, of brilliant and engaging qualities, and of noble race. No one, like him, could write love verses in the vulgar tongue, and he sang them himself; then his erudition was extraordinary for the times — he was the only man who knew Greek and Hebrew.[1] Perhaps he had frequented the Jewish schools (there were many of them in the south), or the rabbis of Troyes, Vitry, or Orleans. There were then two principal schools in Paris; the old episcopal school of Notre Dame, and that of St. Geneviève, on the mountain, where William of Champeaux was in the zenith of his fame. Abelard became one of his pupils, laid his doubts before him, puzzled his master, made sport of him, and put him to silence. He would have done the same with Anselm of Laon, had not the professor, who was a bishop, expelled him from his diocese. Thus did the knight-errant of dialectics go about unhorsing the most famous champions. He says himself that he renounced the other kind of tilting, that of the tournaments, only from his love for the war of words. Thenceforth, victorious and unrivalled, he taught at Paris and at Melun, where Louis the Fat resided, and where the lords were beginning to gather in great numbers. These knights encouraged a man of their own order, who had beaten the priests upon their own ground, and who put the most self-sufficient of the clerks to silence.

The whole body of Christianity was at stake; it was attacked at its base. If original sin, as Abelard said, was not a sin, but a penalty, that penalty

[1 She (Heloise) was perfect mistress of Latin and knew enough Greek and Hebrew to form the basis of her future proficiency. He (Abelard) knew nothing of Greek or Hebrew, although all his biographers except M. Rémusat assume that he knew them both. — G. W. LEWES.]

was unjust, and redemption was useless. Abelard defended himself from such a conclusion; but he justified Christianity by means of such feeble arguments, that he rather did it more damage by declaring that he had no better answer to give. He suffered himself to be brought to a stand by means of the *argumentum ad absurdum*, and then he appealed to authority and faith. And so, then, man was no longer guilty; the flesh was justified and restored to honour; all the sufferings with which men had immolated themselves were superfluous. What became of so many voluntary martyrs, so many fastings and mortifications — the vigils of monks, the tribulations of hermits, the countless tears shed before God? All was vanity — mockery. God was an amiable and easy God, who had nothing to do with all this.

The church was then under the sway of a monk, a simple abbot of Clairvaux, St. Bernard. He was of noble birth, like Abelard, a native of Upper Burgundy. He had been brought up in the puissant house of Cîteaux, the sister and rival of Cluny, which sent forth so many illustrious preachers, and which, half a century afterwards, made the crusade against the Albigenses. But St. Bernard thought Cîteaux too splendid and too rich: he went into needy Champagne, and founded the monastery of Clairvaux in the "Valley of Wormwood." There he was free to lead that life of sorrows that was needful to him: nothing could win him from it; never would he hear of being anything else than a monk, though he might have become archbishop and pope. Constrained to reply to all the kings who consulted him, he found himself all-potent in spite of himself, and condemned to govern Europe. A letter from St. Bernard made the army of the king of France withdraw from Champagne. When schism broke out, by the simultaneous elevation of Innocent II and of Anacletus, St. Bernard was appointed by the church of France to choose between them, and he chose Innocent. But these were not his greatest affairs, as his letters inform us; he lent, not gave, himself to the world; his love and his treasure were elsewhere. Living in the inward life, in prayer and sacrifice, no one could make himself more alone in the midst of bustle; the senses no longer spoke to him of the world. He walked a whole day, says his biographer, along the Lake of Lausanne, and in the evening he asked where the lake was. He drank oil for water, and took clotted blood for butter. He could hardly support himself erect, and yet he found strength to preach the crusade to a hundred thousand men. The multitude thought it was a spirit, rather than a man they saw, when he appeared thus before them, with his red and white beard, his fair and hoary hair; meagre and weak, with but a scarcely visible indication of life upon his cheeks. His sermons were terrible; mothers kept their sons away from them, and wives their husbands; they would else have all followed him to the monasteries. As for him, when he had sent forth the breath of life over the multitude, he returned with speed to Clairvaux, reconstructed his little hut of boughs and foliage near the convent, and assuaged a little his love-sick soul in writing the exposition of the "Song of Songs" which employed his whole life.

Imagine with what grief such a man must have heard of Abelard's success — of the usurpations of logic over religion; the prosaic victory of reasoning over faith; the flame of the sacrifice becoming stifled and extinguished in the world. It was robbing him of his God. St. Bernard was not to be compared with his rival as a logician; but the latter himself wrought his own downfall. He undertook to deduce its consequences from his doctrine, and he applied it to his conduct in life. He had reached that excess of prosperity in which the infatuation common to our nature plunges

us into some great fault. Everything succeeded with him; men held their peace before him; women all regarded with looks of love an engaging, invincible young man, beautiful in face and all-powerful in mind, who had a whole people for his followers. "I had reached such a pass," he says, "that honour what woman I would with my love, I had no refusal to fear." Rousseau says precisely the same thing in his *Confessions* in relating the success of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*.

The Héloïse of the twelfth century was the niece of the canon Fulbert, very young, beautiful, learned, and already celebrated; she was intrusted by her uncle to the teaching of Abelard, who seduced her. This fault had not even love for its excuse; it was deliberately, in cold blood, by way of pastime, that Abelard betrayed the confidence of Fulbert. We know that he was cruelly punished by mutilation for his crime; he renounced the world, and became a Benedictine at St. Denis, about the year 1119. Thither he was pursued by ecclesiastical persecutions, and he found no rest there. The archbishop of Rheims, the friend of St. Bernard, assembled a council against him at Soissons; Abelard was like to have been stoned by the people; he was frightened, shed many tears, burned his books, and said whatever they pleased. He was condemned without inquiry, his enemies alleging that it was enough that he had taught without the authority of the church.

Shut up at St. Médard de Soissons, and afterwards a refugee at St. Denis, he was obliged to fly from that asylum. He had presumed to doubt that St. Denis, the Areopagite, had ever visited France.[1] To impugn that legend was to attack the religion of the monarchy; and from that moment the court withdrew its protection from him. He fled to the dominions of the count of Champagne, and hid himself in a desert place on the Ardusson, two leagues from Nogent. Reduced now to poverty, and having but one clerk with him, he built a hut of reeds and an oratory in honour of that Trinity he was accused of denying, and named his hermitage the Comforter, the Paraclet. But his disciples, having learned where he was, flocked round him; they built them huts, and a town rose in the desert, dedicated to science and to liberty. A little more, and he would once more have appeared as a public teacher; but he was compelled again to hold his peace, and to accept the priory of St. Gildas de Ruys in Brittany, the language of which he did not understand. It was his fate to find no rest; his Breton monks, whose habits he endeavoured to reform, endeavoured to give him poison in the chalice. Thenceforth, the unfortunate man led a wandering life, and even thought, it is said, of taking refuge in some land of the infidels; but first he would once measure his strength against that of the terrible adversary who everywhere pursued him with his zeal and his sanctity. At the instigation of Arnold of Brescia, he challenged St. Bernard to a logical duel before the Council of Sens. The king, the counts of Champagne and Nevers, and a host of bishops were to be present, and to judge of the hits. St. Bernard repaired to the rendezvous reluctantly, conscious as he was of his inferiority. But the threats of the people and the timidity of his rival relieved him from all embarrassment. Abelard durst not defend himself, but contented himself with appealing to the pope. Innocent II owed everything to St. Bernard, and hated Abelard for the sake of his disciple, Arnold of Brescia, who was then roaming over Italy, and summoning the towns to freedom. He ordered Abelard to be shut up; but the latter had anticipated him by voluntarily

[1 A legend had identified St. Denis who flourished in the third century with Dionysius the Areopagite who was converted by St. Paul.]

taking refuge in the monastery of Cluny. The abbot, Peter the Venerable, answered for Abelard, who died there two years afterwards. Such was the end of the restorer of philosophy in the Middle Ages — the son of Pelagius, the father of Descartes, and a Breton like them. From another point of view, he may be regarded as a precursor of the humane and sentimental school, which was revived in the persons of Fénélon and Rousseau.

There is no memory more popular in France than that of Abelard's mistress. The fall of the man made the grandeur of the woman; but for Abelard's misfortune, Héloïse would have been unknown; she would have remained obscure and in the shade, she would have desired no other glory than that of her spouse. At the period of their separation, he made her take the veil, and built for her the Paraclet, of which she became the abbess. There she held a great school of theology, Greek, and Hebrew. Many similar monasteries rose around the Paraclet, and some years after the death of Abelard, Héloïse was declared head of an order by the pope. But her glory consists in her love, so constant and so disinterested — a love to which Abelard's coldness and hardness of heart give a new lustre. Let us compare the language of the two lovers:

"Fulbert," says Abelard, "gave her up, without reserve, to my control, so that, upon my return from the schools, I should apply myself to her instruction, and, if I found her negligent, should chastise her severely. Was not this giving full license to my desires, so that, if I did not succeed by caresses, I might compass my end by threats and blows?"

This dastardly brutality of a pedant of the twelfth century is in strange contrast with the exalted and disinterested sentiments expressed by Héloïse. "God knows, in thee, I sought but thee; nothing of thee but thyself; such was the sole object of my desire. I was ambitious of no advantage, not even of the bond of wedlock; I thought not, thou well knowest, of satisfying either my own wishes or my own pleasure, but thine. If the name of spouse is more holy, sweeter to me seemed that of thy mistress, that (be not angry) of thy concubine (*concubinæ vel seorti*). The more I humbled myself for thee, the more I hoped to gain in thy heart. Yes, though the master of the world, though the emperor had been willing to honour me with the name of his spouse, I would rather have been called thy mistress than his wife and his empress (*tua dici meretrix, quàm illius imperatrix*)." She accounts in a singular manner for her having long refused to be the wife of Abelard: "Would it not have been an unseemly, a deplorable thing, that one woman should appropriate and take for herself alone, him whom nature had created for all mankind? What mind, intent upon the meditations of philosophy or of sacred things, could endure the crying of children, the prating of nurses, the disturbance and tumult of serving-men and women?"

The mere form of the letters that passed between Abelard and Héloïse shows how little the passion of the latter was returned. Abelard divides and subdivides his mistress's letters; he replies to them methodically, and by chapters. He heads his own: "To the spouse of Christ, the slave of Christ"; or "To his dear sister in Christ, Abelard her brother in Christ." Héloïse's tone is very different: "To her master, nay, father; to her husband, nay, brother; his handmaid, his spouse, nay, his daughter, his sister; Héloïse to Abelard."*f*

Abelard and the University

Hastings Rashdall describes the relations between Abelard's influence in Paris and the ultimate development of the University of Paris as follows:

"The less imaginative historians of the University of Paris have generally been contented with tracing its origin to the teaching of Abelard. And it was undoubtedly to the intellectual movement of which Abelard is the most conspicuous representative that the rise of the university must ultimately be ascribed. But there was nothing in the organisation of the schools wherein Abelard taught to distinguish them from any other cathedral schools which might for a time be rendered famous by the teaching of some illustrious master. In the age of Abelard there were three great churches at Paris more or less famous for their schools. In the first place there was the cathedral (Notre Dame), whose schools were presided over by William of Champeaux. Then, on the left bank of the Seine, there was the collegiate church of St. Geneviève; and there was the church of the Canons Regular of St. Victor's, where a school for external scholars was started by William after his retirement from the world. St. Victor's became the head-quarters of the old traditional or positive theology, and it had ceased to exist, or ceased to attract secular students, before the first traces of a university organisation begin to appear. With both the secular schools of Paris, Abelard was at one time or other connected. Denifle's repudiation of the old view that the university arose from a junction between the arts schools of St. Geneviève and the theological schools of Notre Dame goes slightly beyond the evidence, but in the main he is unquestionably right in contending that it was the cathedral schools which eventually developed into the university.

"It was the fame of Abelard which first drew to the streets of Paris the hordes of students whose presence involved that multiplication of masters by whom the university was ultimately formed. In that sense, and in that sense only the origin of the University of Paris may be connected with the name and age of Abelard. Of a university or a recognised society of masters we hear nothing; nay, the existence of such an institution was impossible at a time when the single master of the cloister school seems to have been as a rule the only recognised master in or around each particular church." *m*

The Position of Woman

Abelard had propounded the ideal of pure and disinterested love in his writings, as the consummation of the religious soul. Woman rose up to it, for the first time, in the writings of Héloïse; but still indeed referring it to man, to her spouse, to her visible God.

The restoration of woman, which had begun with Christianity, took place chiefly in the twelfth century. A slave in the East, even in the Greek gynæceum a recluse, emancipated by imperial jurisprudence, she was recognised by the new religion as man's equal. Still Christianity, but just liberated from pagan sensuality, continued to fear and distrust woman; men knew themselves to be weak and fond, and they repudiated her all the more strongly, the more they felt how they sympathised with her in their hearts. Hence, the harsh, and even contemptuous expressions with which they labour to fortify themselves. Woman is usually designated by the ecclesiastical writers, and in the Capitularies, by that degrading, but most expressive phrase, "the weaker vessel" (*vas infirmius*). When Gregory VII wished to free the clergy from its double bond, woman and land, there was a new outburst of invective against that dangerous Eve whose seduction wrought Adam's ruin, and who evermore pursues him in his sons.

A quite opposite movement began in the twelfth century. Free mysticism undertook to raise up what sacerdotal harshness had trampled under

foot. It was especially a Breton, Robert d'Arbrissel, who fulfilled this mission of love. He re-opened the bosom of Christ to women, founded asylums for them, built them Fontevrault, and there were soon Fontevraults all over Christendom. The enterprising charity of Robert applied itself, by preference, to great sinners of the female sex. He taught the clemency of God, and his immeasurable mercy in the vilest haunts. It was a curious thing to see the blessed Robert d'Arbrissel holding forth day and night amidst a crowd of disciples of both sexes, all resting together around him. The bitter sarcasms of his enemies had no effect upon the charitable and courageous Breton, nor even the scandals to which these meetings gave occasion ; he covered all with the wide mantle of grace.

As grace prevailed over the law, a great religious revolution took place. Piety became converted into an enthusiasm of chivalric gallantry ; the mystical church of Lyons celebrated a festival of the Immaculate Conception (1134), thus exalting the ideal of maternal purity precisely at the period when Héloïse was expressing the pure disinterestedness of love in her famous letters. Woman reigned in heaven; she reigned also upon earth. We see her interfere, and with authority, in the affairs of this world. Bertrade de Montfort ruled at once over her first husband, Fulk of Anjou, and her second, Philip I, king of France. Louis VII dates his acts from the coronation of his wife Adela. Women, natural judges in poetical contests, and in the courts of love, sat also as judges in grave matters, and upon an equality with their husbands. The king of France expressly recognises this right.

In the first half of the twelfth century women were everywhere restored to that right of inheritance from which they had been excluded by feudal barbarism in England, Castile, Aragon, Jerusalem, Burgundy, Flanders, Hainault, Vermandois, Aquitaine, Provence, and Lower Languedoc. The rapid extinction of male heirs, the softening of manners, and the progress of equity, restored the right of inheritance to women. They brought sovereignties with them into foreign houses; they linked and bound the world together, accelerated the agglomeration of states, and prepared the way for the centralisation of the great monarchies.

One royal house alone, that of the Capets, did not recognise the right of women ; it remained safe from the mutations which transferred the other states from one dynasty to another ; it received and it did not give. Foreign queens might come ; the female, the movable element, might be renewed, but the male element did not come to it from without, it remained always the same, and with it remained an identity of spirit and a perpetuity of system. This fixity of the dynasty is one of those things which have most contributed to insure the unity and the personality of this mobile country. The common characteristic of the period following the crusade, is an attempt at emancipation. The crusade in its immense movement had been an occasion—an impulse; when the occasion came, the attempt took place, an attempt for the emancipation of the people in the communes, for the emancipation of women, for that of philosophy and of pure thought. This echo of the crusade, like the crusade itself, was to display all its potency and its effect in France, among the most sociable of nations. *f*



CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

[1180–1270 A.D.]

> Almost at the moment that the Crusades broke out, an institution commenced its aggrandisement which has, perhaps, contributed more than any other to the formation of modern society, and to the fusion of all the social elements into two powers, the government and the people, — the institution of Royalty. — GUIZOT.[m]

PHILIP AUGUSTUS, Louis' son and successor, who was about fifteen years of age when he began to reign, was already the nursling of court adulation and homage. His predecessors had not attained dignity sufficient to expose them to this bane of the royal nature. Congratulations, couched in the language of oriental hyperbole, had greeted his birth. He was styled the *Dieu-donné*, "the God-given"; and self-constituted laureates began already to celebrate the majesty of the monarch of the French. Formerly, the surrounding nobles had disdained to dispute court favour or influence; but the first years of Philip's reign were taken up with the rivalry of the houses of Flanders and Champagne, which each sought to be the masters and ministers of the young sovereign. Henry II of England gave his support to the counts of Champagne, and the partisans of Flanders were obliged to retire from Paris. They formed a league, and menaced war; but Philip, with the English monarch's aid, easily overcame the malcontents. Henry showed generosity on this occasion. Instead of profiting by the divisions of the French, and keeping them alive, he frankly supported the young king against his refractory barons. He was king himself, and sympathised with royalty. Philip ill repaid this kindness: he imitated his father's policy in seducing the sons of the English monarch from their allegiance; and their frequent ingratitude at length broke the heart of the sensitive and passionate monarch. Richard, duke of Aquitaine, known as Cœur de Lion, and his father's successor on the throne, was the especial friend and ally of Philip in these quarrels; and for a long time the princes shared the same tent and the same bed.

Meantime a third crusade began to be preached. This prevalent enthusiasm, like the rebellions of an oppressed yet brave people, was sure to arouse itself and reawaken as soon as time had elapsed sufficient to allow

the disasters of the past to be forgotten. Saladin had recently taken Jerusalem. Fugitives instantly filled Europe with the dismal tidings. The cry for a crusade became general: it was no longer, however, the church that called a council to debate and decide upon the question; another power had arisen to rob the clergy of their initiative. The king called a parliament (*parlement*) of his barons at Gisors, and there a third crusade was determined upon. Cœur de Lion was the first to assume the cross; and king Philip, only hurt at being anticipated, followed his example. Frederick Barbarossa also took the same resolution.

In June of the year 1190, Philip Augustus received the pilgrim's scrip and staff from the hands of the abbot of St. Denis. Richard received his at Tours; and it was remarked, as an omen, that, as he leaned on the staff, it broke under his weight. In order to avoid the disasters of former crusades, they were to proceed to Palestine by sea. The two kings wintered in Sicily on their voyage thither, and there laid the foundation of their future jealousy and hate. The crusaders found the barons of Syria engaged in the siege of Acre. Their arrival hastened its surrender, and at the same time marked it with crime. Richard caused upwards of two thousand captives to be massacred in cold blood, and Philip was guilty of a similar piece of cruelty. The monarchs, indeed, had some slight breach of stipulations to allege, or might excuse their conduct as a reprisal for that of Saladin, who put to death many of the prisoners whom he made at the battle of Tiberias, more especially all those whose tonsure marked them to belong to the order of the Templars. It was thus that the ferocity of oriental manners came to alloy the more generous spirit of chivalry. In Palestine the French learned to be merciless towards their religious enemies, and hence it was that the fair page of their history was soon afterwards stained by the massacre of those whom they called heretics at home.



PHILIP AUGUSTUS

Philip Augustus could not long endure the superior renown and prowess of Cœur de Lion. He seized the pretext of an illness to quit Palestine and abandon the field of glory to his rival. Returning home, he besought the pope to release him from the oath which bound him to respect the rights and territories of a brother crusader. The pontiff refused; but Philip felt himself sufficiently absolved by the Macchiavellian law of monarchical policy: and fortune, in making Richard fall captive to the duke of Austria, on his return from the Holy Land, seemed to favour the envious designs of the French monarch. Philip no sooner was informed of Richard's captivity,

than he leagued with his brother John, and invaded Normandy. He took several towns and castles, but was repulsed from before Rouen. At length Richard was released, or, as Philip wrote to his confederate, "the devil broke loose." We expect on this occasion to read of a furious war betwixt the sovereigns. And yet no brilliant feat, no general engagement, marked that which ensued. Petty treason and short truce, varied by a skirmish or a marauding party, were all the effects produced by the envy of Philip and the resentment of the lion-hearted king. The death of the latter by an arrow-shot, as he besieged a castle in the Limousin, left a less formidable rival to Philip in the person of King John (1199). The writer of fiction never imagined a baser character than that of John. His cowardice and meanness form a phenomenon and an exception in the feudal ages. The nullity of such a rival converted Philip Augustus from the powerless intriguer to the conqueror and the hero.[b]

PRINCE ARTHUR OF BRITTANY

Although Richard on his death-bed declared John to be his heir, the crown of England descended by right of primogeniture to the young prince Arthur, son of Geoffrey, duke of Brittany and the elder brother of John; the latter seized it. But Anjou, Poitou, and Touraine, weary of English domination, declared for Arthur, and invoked Philip's protection. The king of France took up Arthur's cause and then abandoned it (1200), after obtaining from John the advantage his political selfish policy was seeking.[c]

But Arthur had been accepted by the Bretons at his birth as a liberator and avenger. Old Eleanor, alone, held out against her grandson, for her son John, and for the unity of the English realm, which the accession of Arthur would have divided. Arthur, in fact, held that unity very cheap. He offered the king of France to cede Normandy to him, provided he might have Brittany, Maine, Touraine, Anjou, Poitou, and Aquitaine. John would have been reduced to the possession of England alone. Philip willingly assented to this, put his own garrisons in Arthur's best fortresses, and demolished them when he had no hope of maintaining his position in them. John's nephew, thus betrayed by his ally, turned once more to his uncle; then he came back to the party of France, invaded Poitou, and besieged his grandmother, Eleanor, in Mirebeau. It was nothing new in that family to see the sons armed against their parents. Meanwhile, John came to the rescue, delivered his mother, defeated Arthur, and took him prisoner with most of the great lords of his party. What became of the captive? This has never been clearly ascertained. Matthew Paris[j] alleges that John treated him well at first, but was afterwards alarmed by the threats and the obstinacy of the young Breton. "Arthur disappeared," he says, "and God grant that it may not have been as malicious rumour reports." But Arthur had excited too many hopes to allow of the popular imagination resigning itself to this uncertainty. It was confidently affirmed that John had caused him to be put to death, and it was soon added that he had killed him with his own hand. The chaplain of Philip Augustus relates, as if he had seen it with his own eyes, that John took Arthur in a boat, stabbed him twice with a dagger, and threw him into the river three miles from the castle of Rouen. The Bretons placed the scene of the tragedy in their own country near Cherbourg, at the foot of those ill-omened cliffs that present a line of precipices all along the ocean. Thus the tradition went on

enlarging in details, and in dramatic interest, and at last Shakespeare makes Arthur a helpless young child, whose gentle and innocent words disarmed the most brutal assassin.[d]

Philip was in the meantime checked in his projects by the court of Rome, which had laid an interdict upon him, on account of his divorce from Ingeborg (Ingeburge) of Denmark. And the preaching of a fifth crusade,[1] which eventually led to the establishment of the Frankish empire of Romania, about the same time took from him the interest and the aid of many nobles and chevaliers. He was, during the same interval, engaged in the conquest of Normandy, which the imbecility and cowardice of John delivered to his arms without defence. Roger de Lascy held the fortress of Les Andelys for several months against the French, and was the only valiant servitor of an unworthy monarch. The barons and warriors of England disdained to fight under his banner. There was as yet none of that rivalry which afterwards sprang up betwixt the nations. The monarchs of both were French princes, speaking the French tongue; and, although subsequent historians have given a national colour to the combats and conquests of Philip, the struggle was almost purely personal. Rouen, the capital of Normandy, surrendered to him (1204), without John's making a single effort to preserve it. And thus a few years of the reign of one weak prince more than counterbalanced the long-established superiority of the monarchs of England.

It has been seen what use the French monarchs made of their courts of peers, and of the judicial supremacy allowed them, in extending their authority over barons heretofore independent. Philip dared to apply the same principle to the dukes of Normandy, which his father had successfully done with regard to the counts of Bourbon and Auvergne. He summoned John before his suzerain court, to answer for the murder of Arthur and other crimes. Henry II, or Richard, would have given fit answer to such a summons. The Norman princes always held their homage to be that by parade or courtesy, not *homage-liege*. But John had neither the sense of his dignity, nor the spirit to maintain it. He allowed the jurisdiction of Philip's court, though he feared to obey his summons; and he thus seemed to allow a legal right to the usurpations of Philip. The latter, indeed, appeared to feel the want of dignity in the assessors of his court. All nobles holding their lands directly of the king were peers in his parliament; and thus the petty lords of the counties of Paris and Orleans ranked equally with the dukes of Burgundy or the counts of Flanders. Philip remedied this, by appointing twelve great peers, or rather by pretending that such a number had always existed since the twelve paladins of Charlemagne. Of these, six were clerics, six laics; the latter being the dukes of Normandy, of Aquitaine, of Burgundy, the counts of Toulouse, of Flanders, and of Champagne. This division of the aristocracy in the high and low nobility, was, however, as yet but nominal; the lesser barons still continued to consider themselves as the peers of the greater, and to have an equal voice in the royal courts. It is important for the reader to mark the rise of this feudal institution, and equally so to mark the difference of its fate and progress in France and in England. In the former country, the parliament became amalgamated with lawyers, and preserved to the last its judicial functions, whilst its legislative authority became but a shadow. In England, on the contrary, it guarded the more precious privilege of legislation, abandoning a considerable portion of its judicial rights.

[1 This is called by many historians the Fourth Crusade.]

[1204–1208 A.D.]

By the discomfiture of John, Philip Augustus united to the monarchy of France not only Normandy, but the provinces of Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou. Artois he had acquired as the dowry of his wife, Isabella of Hainault. The counties of the south remained still independent of his sway. They looked to the king of Aragon as their suzerain; and there existed far more congeniality of feelings and habits betwixt the Spaniards and Provençals, than betwixt the Provençals and French. Certain events of the reign of Philip, which we are about to relate, destroyed the independence of the people of the south, as well as their connection with the Aragonese, and extended the authority of the French monarch to the Mediterranean and the Pyrenees.

THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE

While Philip Augustus adroitly wrested Normandy and its dependencies from the hands of John, a series of events took place in Languedoc which had the effect of destroying its independence, and of bringing that fine region not only nominally, as it had hitherto been, but really under the dominion of the kings of France.[b]

At this period the southern part of France held but distant relations with the north. Two powerful houses, that of Barcelona and that of Toulouse, shared dominion over it, with the exception of Aquitaine, which extended to the Pyrenees. This isolation naturally gave the south a separate existence, character, and interest. The tongue, that of the Limousin or of Provence, resembling more the Aragonese than the French of Paris, had become, thanks to the troubadours, a literary language. The cities contained a large bourgeois element, which had become wealthy through commerce.

It was in the midst of this people, active, ardent, isolated from most of their neighbours by political as well as natural barriers, corrupted moreover by the refinements of an equivocal civilisation and by the enervating literature of the troubadours, that there broke forth, at the end of the twelfth century, the Albigensian heresy, a powerful one, that having long undermined the ground, ended by being a menace to Catholic beliefs, the church, and society itself.

Several heretical sects dating from the early Christian time had not ceased to have their obscure upholders in France. Such were the Manichæans or Paulicians who believed in the co-existence of a principle of good and a principle of evil. It was the Paulicians who were condemned to be burned at Orleans by King Robert (1022). During the time of the crusaders, the sect, revived by frequent intercourse with the Orient where it had originated, spread all over the centre of France. It is thought that this extension was the work of the emigrants who arrived from Bulgaria; at last the heretics received the name of Bulgarians or Boulgres, and it was rumoured that they had a mysterious chief, or, as they said, a resident pope in that country. They were called Albigenses because they were especially numerous in the vicinity of Albi, and by this last name they have been preserved in history.

Some of their doctrines are known: they regarded the devil, or principle of evil, as the first author of the creation; they rejected the sacraments; they interpreted the Scriptures in a different way from the Catholic tradition. Also they possessed a kind of sacerdotal college whose members, called "the perfect ones," performed special rites. It is very difficult to form any idea of their dogmas as a whole, for they had no theologian, no teacher, and they

have left no writings. One can judge the basis of this heresy, and the sects belonging to it, only indirectly by the writings of the authors and teachers who fought them. These writers have attacked above all the strangeness of their practices and the vulgarity of their superstitions.

But the dominant character of all these sects was their hatred of the church. They pretended to re-establish the primitive simplicity of the religion, which the church had corrupted, and among themselves they were known as *cathares*, or "the pure ones."[e]

For a long time the holy see seemed not alive to the importance of this sect. It was Pope Innocent III who first perceived its dangerous tendency, and who took certain steps for its destruction. He issued interdicts against such princes as should favour them, and offered the spoil of the heretic to whoever should subdue and slay him. The principal lord of the south of France was at that time Raymond VI, count of Toulouse; and he at least tolerated the Albigenses, as those primitive reformers were called, aware of their moral purity and sincere devotion. Peter of Castelnau, the pope's legate, reproached the count of Toulouse with his want of zeal, and was indignant at his forbearance to extirpate the new opinions by fire and sword. The legate used no measured language; he not only excommunicated Raymond, but insulted him in his court, and then took his departure. The count of Toulouse expressed his indignant feelings before his followers as Henry II did after the insolence of Thomas à Becket, and with the same fatal effect. On the day after, Peter of Castelnau fell under the dagger of a gentleman of the count, in a hostelry on the Rhone, where he had stopped.



An Officer of the King's Household, Thirteenth Century

Pope Innocent was driven to transports of rage on learning the assassination of his legate. He not only excommunicated the count of Toulouse, but promulgated a crusade against him. He called on all the nobles of France, on its princes, and its prelates, to join in the "holy" war, to assume the cross, as being engaged against infidels. And the same privileges and indulgences were granted to the crusader of this civil war, that previously were bestowed on those who embarked fortune and life in the perilous attempt to rescue the Holy Land from the Saracen. Spoil, wealth, and honour in this world, together with certain salvation in the next, were now offered at too cheap a rate to be refused. Crowds of adventurers flocked to the standard; and a formidable army was assembled at Lyons in the spring of 1209, under the command of the legate commander, Amalric, abbot of Cîteaux. The pope at the same time created a new ecclesiastical militia for the destruction of heresy. The order of St. Dominic, or of the friars inquisitors, was instituted; and these infernal missionaries were let loose in couples upon the hapless Languedoc, like bloodhounds, to scent their prey and then devour it.

Raymond, count of Toulouse, had neither the force nor the courage to oppose so formidable an invasion. He repaired to the crusaders' army, delivered up his fortresses and cities, and suffered the humiliating penance of a public flogging in the church of St. Giles. The count's relative and feudatory, Raymond Roger, viscount of Béziers and Carcassonne, regions infected with the heresy of the Albigenses, came also to make submission. The abbot of Cîteaux, who was prudent enough to accept that of the count of Toulouse, feared to lose all his prey. He refused to admit the exculpation of the viscount of Béziers, and plainly told him that his only chance was to defend himself to the utmost. The young viscount courageously accepted the advice. He summoned the most faithful of his vassals, abandoned the open country as well as towns of lesser consequence to the enemy, and restricted his efforts to the defence of Béziers and of Carcassonne. He shut himself up in the latter. The fury of the crusaders fell first upon Béziers: they had scarcely sat down before the unfortunate town, when a sally of the garrison was repulsed with such vigour that the besiegers entered the town together with the routed host of the citizens. Word of this unexpected success was instantly brought to the abbot of Cîteaux, and his orders were demanded as to how the innocent were to be distinguished from the guilty. "Slay them all," exclaimed the legate of the vicar of Christ; "the Lord will know his own." The entire population was in consequence put to the sword; nor woman nor infant was spared. Upwards of twenty thousand human beings perished in the massacre—the sanguinary first-fruits of modern persecution. Carcassonne was next invested, bravely attacked, and as valiantly defended; the young viscount distinguishing himself in defence of his rights, while Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, was the most prominent warrior of the crusaders. At length the legate grew weary of the viscount's obstinacy, and offered him terms. He gave him a safe-conduct, sanctioned by his own oath and that of the barons of his army. Raymond Roger came with three hundred of his followers to the tent of the legate. "Faith," said the latter, "is not to be kept with those who have no faith"; and he ordered the viscount and his friends to be put in chains. The inhabitants of Carcassonne found means to fly. In a general assembly of the crusaders, the lordships of Béziers and Carcassonne were given to Simon de Montfort, in reward of his zeal and valour; and to make the gift sure, it was accompanied with the person of his rival. The unfortunate viscount, the victim of the legate's perfidy, soon after perished in prison.

The victory of the crusaders was of course followed by executions at the stake and on the scaffold. The friars inquisitors of the order of St. Dominic did not relax their zeal. A general revolt against De Montfort was the consequence, in which the people of Toulouse joined. The Provençal army was headed by Pedro king of Aragon, the uncle of the late viscount of Béziers. It was he who had persuaded the unfortunate viscount to trust himself to the legate, and to him in consequence fell the duty of taking vengeance. The cross, however—the profaned cross—was still successful. The Provençals were routed by Simon de Montfort at the battle of Muret, and the king of Aragon was slain. This victory seemed to establish the power of De Montfort in Languedoc. He took possession of all the provinces of his rival, even of the town of Toulouse; and an assembly of prelates sanctioned the usurpation. But the cruel spirit of De Montfort would not allow him to rest quiet in his new empire. Violence and persecution marked his rule; he sought to destroy the Provençal population by the sword or the stake, nor could he bring himself to tolerate the liberties of the citizens

of Toulouse. In 1217 the Toulousans again revolted, and war once more broke out betwixt Count Raymond and Simon de Montfort. The latter formed the siege of the capital, and was engaged in repelling a sally, when a stone from one of the walls struck him and put an end to his existence. The death of De Montfort was of course considered a martyrdom by the clergy, and his fame in their chronicles far outshines that of Godfrey de Bouillon or of Richard the Lion-hearted.

LEAGUE AGAINST PHILIP AUGUSTUS

King Philip was in the meantime pursuing his darling object, the humbling the power of the princes of England. He had already driven John from the west of France. That monarch, at variance with his barons, and at the same time excommunicated by the church, seemed an easy prey to Philip. The French king meditated the conquest of England. He leagued with the malcontents of that country, and formed a powerful army for the purposes of invasion. John, to ward off the blow, not only became reconciled to the Roman see, but made himself and his kingdom feudatory to the pope. A papal legate immediately took John under his protection ; and the French monarch, rather than risk a quarrel with the church, turned his armies towards Flanders, which he wasted and plundered impitiably, from hatred to its count.

The emperor Otto, then in alliance with King John against France, came to the relief of the Flemings ; and thus, for the first time since the accession of the new dynasty, the armies of France and Germany found themselves arrayed against each other in national hostility, each commanded by its respective monarch. The rival hosts met at Bouvines, in the month of August, 1214. Twenty thousand combatants on either side, together with the presence of two monarchs, gave gravity and importance to the meeting.[b]

The Battle of Bouvines (1214 A.D.)

The two armies remained for a time a short distance apart, not daring to begin operations; and the French were retreating over the bridge of Bouvines to march upon Hainault, when the enemy, attacking the rearguard, obliged them to turn about.

The chaplain, William le Breton,[k] who during the action remained beside the king singing psalms, says: "Philip was resting under a tree near a chapel, his armour laid aside. At the first sound of combat he entered the church for a short prayer, armed hastily, and mounted his steed with as great enthusiasm as though on his way to a wedding or a feast. Loud shouts resounded from the field: 'To arms, men of war, to arms!' together with the blare of trumpets. The king rode to the front, not waiting for his banner — the oriflamme of St. Denis, a flag of scarlet silk, that day carried by Gallon de Montigny, a brave man. The bishop-elect of Senlis, Guérin, ordered the battle so that the French had the sun behind them, while the enemy fought with the sun in their eyes. Three hundred mounted peasants of Soissons, vassals of the abbot of St. Médard, opened action on the right wing, boldly charging the Flemish cavalry. The latter hesitated to engage with their inferiors, but the cry, 'Death to the French!' raised by one among them proved decisive; and the Burgundians, led by their duke, arriving to reinforce those of Soissons, there was a furious combat. On this side Count Ferrand of Flanders fought."



THE BATTLE OF BOUVINES

[1214 A.D.]

When the battle began the militia had already crossed the bridge; they recrossed in haste, rallied under the royal standard, and took position in the centre in front of the king and his guard. The German cavalry, among whom rode the emperor Otto, charged and penetrated their ranks, and had almost reached the king when they were checked by the prompt action of his officers. In the midst of this encounter arrived the German infantry. These dragged Philip from his horse, and before he could recover his feet attempted to thrust at him through the visor of his helmet or a flaw in his armour. Montigny, who carried the colours, waved his banner frantically for assistance; some horse- and foot-soldiers hastened up. These rescued the king, set him on his horse, and he again plunged into the mêlée.

Otto in his turn was near to being captured. William des Barres, the bravest and ablest of the French cavaliers, the fortunate adversary of Richard the Lion-hearted, whom he had twice overcome, had the emperor by the helmet, and was thrusting at him furiously when overwhelmed by a torrent of the enemy. Unable to make him loose his hold or to close with him, they killed his horse under him; but disentangling himself he succeeded, alone and on foot, in clearing with his sword and his poniard an ample space around him. Otto escaped.

On the right Ferrand, count of Flanders, had fallen wounded into the hands of the French; in the centre the emperor and his German princes had taken to flight: but on the left Renaud de Boulogne and the English held firm. They had overcome the men of Dreux, of Perche, of Ponthieu, and of Vimeu. "Whereupon," says the poet-chronicler, "Philip de Dreux, bishop of Beauvais, happening to have in his hand a club, and forgetting in his rage and grief the dignity of his office, struck down the English commander and with him many others, spilling no blood but breaking many bones. He enjoined upon those about him the necessity of taking upon themselves the credit of this deed, that he might not fall under reproach for violating the traditions of his office."

The English were soon completely routed with the exception of Renaud de Boulogne, who had drawn up a double circle of infantry bristling with spears. He charged therefrom as from a fort, and there returned for refuge and to recover breath. At last his horse was wounded; he fell and was captured. Five other counts and twenty-five knights-banneret had been taken.

The return of the king to Paris was a march of triumph. All along the route the churches dispersed indulgences, and the hymns of the choirs mingled with the clash of war implements. The houses were hung with draperies; the roads strewn with branches and fresh flowers. Men and women, children and old people ran to the crossroads to see the count of Flanders who, wounded and in chains, was carried in a litter; some among them crying: "Ferrand, bound and in irons (*ferré*), no longer shalt thou kick against the pricks and hurl defiance at thy masters."

At Paris the townspeople, with a multitude of clerks and students, burst into songs and hymns on the arrival of the king. The day not sufficing for the jubilation, they festooned the dark with innumerable lanterns, so that the night was brilliant as the day. The students kept holiday for a week. In the midst of these rejoicings the troops, which had comported themselves so creditably in the strife, delivered to the provost of Paris the prisoners in their charge. The king left them a certain number to be ransomed and imprisoned the rest. Ferrand was lodged in the new tower of the Louvre, where he remained for thirteen years. Near Senlis was built Victory Abbey, whose ruins are still to be seen.[c]

LAST YEARS AND INFLUENCE OF PHILIP AUGUSTUS

The brilliant success of Bouvines seems to have contented and allayed the hitherto restless ambition of Philip. In a year or two after, the barons of England, discontented with John, offered their crown to Louis, the son of Philip Augustus. The old monarch hesitated; he dreaded the anathema with which the pope threatened him, if he attacked his vassal, John of England. Prince Louis was obliged to undertake the expedition with but scanty aid from his parent. He was at first successful. Almost all England owned his sovereignty. The castle of Dover alone held out. But the death of John, and the proclaiming of his son, Henry III, soon obliged the French prince to abandon his claim and his conquests in England.

In the south, Philip Augustus showed himself equally dead to enterprise and lost in spirit. Amaury de Montfort, son of Simon, offered to cede to the king all his rights in Languedoc, which he was unable to defend against the old house of Toulouse. Philip hesitated to accept the important cession, and left the rival houses to the continuance of a struggle carried feebly on by either side. He at length expired, in 1223, after a reign of forty-three years. This period of half a century was one of uninterrupted progress to the French monarchy, and to its sovereign power. Though much of this was due to the age, to circumstances, and to the natural development of the country's political system, still much remains due to the personal character of Philip — to his activity, his prudence, foresight, and courage. The mere list of the provinces which he subdued and united to the monarchy forms the fittest monument to his fame. These were Normandy, Maine, Anjou, Touraine, and Poitou, wrested from John; Picardy and Auvergne, won in the commencement of his reign; Artois, acquired by his marriage with Isabella of Hainault; and, finally, the influence over Languedoc which the crusaders brought him, and which nothing but Philip's age and declining strength prevented him from converting into sovereignty. In minor matters the active spirit of Philip Augustus equally displayed itself. He put the police on an efficient footing; he walled and paved Paris and the principal towns under his sway; he built and fortified; he encouraged literature by the foundation of professorships; improved the discipline of the army; and, with all his enterprises and expenses, so ordered his finances as to leave a considerable treasure at his death.

LOUIS VIII (1223–1226 A.D.)

When Louis VIII succeeded his father Philip on the throne, it was remarked with joy by the lovers of legitimacy that he was descended by his mother, Isabella of Hainault, from Charles of Lorraine, the last prince of Charlemagne's blood, and that he thus united the rights of Carlovingian and Capetian. He was feeble in person, and is said not to have been endowed with much capacity; but the sage policy of Philip Augustus, together with the impulse he had given to affairs, continued to direct them, and to render France triumphant over her enemies. Henry III lost the towns of Niort and La Rochelle, and was driven by Louis from Poitou; yet so little did the English feel the loss of this province, that it is scarcely noticed by the historians of the island. The barons were so much occupied with jealousy of their sovereign and of his power, that Henry could procure or send no aid to his French provinces. A feeble expedition was at length fitted out, which preserved Gascony to England, but recovered nothing.

A singular cause of contention arose about this time in Flanders. Baldwin, its last count, had been one of the leaders of the Fifth Crusade, which, in the commencement of the century, took Constantinople from the Greeks. He had been elected emperor of Romania, and had been the first of the Latin dynasty which reigned over it. Soon after, in the year 1205, he had been taken prisoner by the Bulgarians, and had not since been heard of. His daughter Joan succeeded to the county of Flanders, and had married Ferdinand (Ferrand), prince of Portugal, who had opposed Philip Augustus, and who was taken prisoner by that monarch at the battle of Bouvines. Joan took no steps to liberate her husband, or to pay his ransom, when an aged man appeared in Flanders, calling himself Count Baldwin, and giving an account of his long captivity and recent escape from the Bulgarians. Joan denied the identity of this person with her father; Louis VIII was of her opinion; while Henry III treated and allied himself with him as the veritable Baldwin. The self-entitled count appeared before King Louis at Péronne, offering proofs of his identity; but unfortunately he could not recall the place where he had done homage to Philip Augustus, nor the place where he had been knighted, nor yet the place and day of his marriage. Whether he really could not make answer to these questions, or whether age had troubled his memory, the old man was condemned as a pretender, and the countess Joan soon after caused him to be hanged. The common people still persisted in giving credit to his identity with Count Baldwin, and looked on Joan as the murderer of her father. Henry III in no way supported this his unfortunate ally.



LOUIS VIII
(From an old French print)

The sovereignty over Languedoc was still undecided. King Louis was anxious to undertake a crusade in that country, with all the indulgences and advantages of a warlike pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The hostilities with England and the fickleness of the pope delayed the execution of this purpose. Both obstacles were removed at length. Amaury de Montfort being driven from the conquests of his father by the sons of Count Raymond, reanimated the zeal of the pope and the old crusaders. Amaury retired to Paris, and made cession of his claims to King Louis, who, in return, promised him the office of constable. A new crusade was preached against the Albigenses; and Louis marched towards Languedoc at the head of a formidable army in the spring of the year 1226. The town of Avignon had proffered to the crusaders the facilities of crossing the Rhone under her walls, but refused entry within them to such an host. Louis, having arrived

at Avignon, insisted on passing through the town: the Avignonais shut their gates and defied the monarch, who instantly formed the siege. One of the rich municipalities of the south was almost a match for the king of France. He was kept three months under its walls, his army a prey to famine, to disease, and to the assaults of a brave garrison. The crusaders lost twenty thousand men. The people of Avignon at length submitted, but on no dishonourable terms. This was the only resistance that Louis experienced in Languedoc. Raymond VII dared not meet the crusaders in the field, nor durst one of his towns or châteaux remain faithful to him. All submitted. Louis retired from his facile conquest; he himself, and the chiefs of his army, stricken by an epidemy which had prevailed in the conquered regions. The monarch's feeble frame could not resist it: he expired at Montpensier in Auvergne, in November, 1226.[b]

LOUIS IX, CALLED ST. LOUIS (1226–1270 A.D.)

Now we come to the true hero of the Middle Ages, a prince pious as he was brave; who was devoted to feudalism and yet struck it the most telling blows; who venerated the church yet knew how to resist its head; who respected law yet placed justice above it; a frank and gentle soul and loving heart filled with Christian charity, yet one that condemned to torture the body of the sinner for the salvation of his soul; who on earth looked only towards heaven and made of his kingly office a magistracy of order and equity. Rome has canonised him, and the people still see him seated under the oak of Vincennes dispensing justice to all comers. This saint, this man of peace, did more in the simplicity of his heart for the advancement of royalty than the most subtle counsellors or ten fighting monarchs, because the king, in after time, appeared to the people as the incarnation of Justice.[1]

For more than a century the sword of royalty, so far as it pertained to France, had been valiantly carried. But the son of Louis VIII was a child of eleven years. A coalition of the most powerful vassals was formed at once to profit by his minority. The regent, his mother, Blanche of Castile, won to her side one of the confederates, Thibaut, the powerful count of Champagne, sent the royal army to save him from the attack of his former allies and obtained from him, when he inherited the kingdom of Navarre, the important counties of Blois, Chartres, and Sancerre. A treaty, signed in 1229, assured to one of the king's brothers the succession of the county of Toulouse and a marriage arranged between a second brother of St. Louis and the heiress of Provence prepared the way, at a future date, for the union of that country with France. Already the royal seneschals were established at Beaucaire and Carcassonne, by which the king found himself master, through himself or his brothers, of a large part of southern France. The king's majority was proclaimed in 1236, but the wise regent still held the greatest influence over her son and the direction of affairs.

The great pontificate of Innocent III had given new energy to the church and to religious sentiment. The spirit of the Crusades which had been

[1 "St. Louis," says Guizot,[m] "was above all a conscientious man, a man who before acting weighed the question to himself of the moral good or evil, the question as to whether what he was about to do was good or evil in itself, independently of all utility, of all consequences. Such men are rarely seen and still more rarely remain upon the throne. Truly speaking, there are hardly more than two examples in history, one in antiquity, the other in modern times: Marcus Aurelius and St. Louis. These are, perhaps, the only two princes who, on every occasion, have formed the first rule of their conduct from their moral creeds — Marcus Aurelius, a stoic, St. Louis, a Christian."]

extinguished during the rivalry of Philip Augustus with Richard Cœur de Lion and John Lackland was rekindled. In 1235 preaching the "holy war" was recommenced in France, and, as on too many other occasions, the movement was begun by the massacre of those whose ancestors had nailed the sainted victim to the cross of Golgotha. Everywhere the Jews were slaughtered, until the Council of Tours was obliged to take these unhappy people under their protection. Heretics found even less mercy. Thibaut of Champagne burned 183 of them on Mount Aimé near Vertus. This crusade, in which Thibaut himself, the dukes of Burgundy and Brittany took part, was not successful. The crusaders were beaten at Gaza in Palestine, and those who returned brought back with them nothing but the honour of having broken a few lances in the Holy Land.

Up to his war with England St. Louis gave little sign of activity; but in 1241 the emperor Frederick II detained the French prelates who had gone to Rome to attend a council, and Louis demanded with great firmness that they be set at liberty.

"Since the prelates of our realm have for no reason deserved their detention," he writes the emperor, "may it please your grace to set them at liberty. You will thus appease us, for we regard their detention as an insult, and our royal majesty would lose respect if we could keep quiet under such circumstances. May your imperial prudence not go so far as to allege your power or your will, since the kingdom of France is not so weak that it will resign itself to be trampled under your feet." The emperor released his prisoners. Some time before Louis, on behalf of himself and one of his brothers, refused the imperial crown of Frederick II which the pope had offered him, and he had also refused the pontiff's request to modify a royal ordinance of 1234 restraining the jurisdiction of ecclesiastical tribunals — a necessary measure, since these courts had come to judge many more civil cases than the lay tribunals.

This man who spoke so firmly acted in the same manner when forced to take up arms. Attacked in 1242 by the English, who sustained several of his rebellious barons, St. Louis beat them at Taillebourg and at Saintes. Perhaps he would have been able to drive them out of France, but he refused to push his victory. Acquisitions made in the last half century had tripled the extent of the royal domain, but they seemed to him tainted with violence because they were the gain of two confiscations. Through conscientious scruples he left the king of England, in a treaty which he did not sign until his return from the crusade in 1259 [The Treaty of Abbeville], the duchy of Guienne, that is to say Bordeaux, Limoges, Périgueux, Cahors, Agen, Saintonge to the south of the Charente, and Gascony, on condition of homage to the crown. And to prevent perjury he obliged the lords who held fiefs from both crowns to choose between the two sovereigns. The limits of the kingdom were equally uncertain on the south; he fixed them at a convention with the king of Aragon, and the county of Barcelona ceased to be dependent on the French crown.

In 1245, Pope Innocent IV, driven out of Italy by the emperor Frederick II, took refuge at Lyons and there held in the cathedral church of St. John of that city the thirteenth ecumenical council at which 140 bishops assisted. The pope solemnly deposed the emperor and exhorted all Christian princes to march to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre.

The spirit of the Crusades, which had been extinguished during the rivalry of Philip Augustus and Richard Cœur de Lion, was rekindled. The Spaniards had their crusade against the Moors, the Germans against the Slavs,

and the knights of Italy fought against the cities; but in France, in spite of the great satiety of war from the Albigensian troubles, there remained sufficient martial spirit to undertake new crusades. In 1239 many had gone; we know with what success. Jerusalem, which Frederick II had bought back from the hands of the infidels (1229) had now come again under the power of Khwarismian barbarians (1239).

First Crusade of St. Louis (1248–1254 A.D.)

St. Louis had not listened to the appeal of the Fathers of the Council of Lyons to assume the cross, but during an illness which, in 1244, brought him to the edge of the grave, he made a vow to go to the Holy Land. His mother and counsellors struggled in vain against this imprudent resolution. Louis left his power again in the hands of Queen Blanche and embarked at Aigues-Mortes, a little city which at that time was joined to the Mediterranean by a canal across the swamps and salt marshes. The king bought it from the monks of Psalmodi Abbey in order to have a port of his own upon that sea, for Marseilles belonged to his brother the count of Provence. Many crusaders embarked at the latter city, among them the king's friend the seneschal of Champagne and the sire de Joinville, who, with Villehardouin, is the first in point of date, as in merit, of the old French prose writers. It was not without many misgivings that he determined to follow his master. In setting out to join him he passed near his own castle, "but," he said, "I dare not turn my face towards Joinville, for fear that my heart would fail me in leaving my two children and my fine castle which are so dear to me." On the banks of the Rhone he saw the ruins of a castle which the king had had destroyed because its lord had a bad name for stripping and robbing all the merchants and pilgrims who passed by.



A French Knight, Thirteenth Century

St. Louis had been collecting for two years a large store of provisions on the island of Cyprus. The army left there in eighteen hundred ships, large and small, for Egypt. Damietta, at one of the mouths of the Nile, was captured (June 7th, 1249), but precious time was lost before marching upon Cairo. Five months and a half of delay stoutened the hearts of the mamelukes. The crusaders took a month to cover the five leagues which separated them from the town of Mansurah. A badly directed fight at the same place cost the lives of a large number of knights and of St. Louis' brother the count

of Artois. When the prior of the Hospital, says Joinville,[t] came to ask of St. Louis if he had any news of his brother, the king replied that he had, that he knew his brother was in heaven. The prior tried to comfort him in praising the valour the prince had always shown and the glory he had gained that day, and the good king replied that God was adored in all that he had done. And then he began to shed great tears, at which many people who were looking on were oppressed by grief and compassion (February, 1250).

Soon the army was surrounded by enemies and decimated by pest. Joinville was stricken down, and equally so his poor chaplain. One day it happened that he was chanting mass before the seneschal's bedside; when the priest was at the sacrament Joinville perceived him to be so ill that with his own eyes he saw him faint. The seneschal got up and ran to raise him and then he managed to finish the mass, but never said it again, and died. The retreat was disastrous and finally they had to surrender. "The good, saintly man, the king," did honour to his captivity by his courage and inspired even his enemies with respect for his virtues. They released him for a large ransom. Once free he made his way to Palestine and stayed there three years, employing his influence and zeal in maintaining harmony among the Christians and his resources in repairing the fortifications of the places they still occupied.

The news of these disasters only served to increase the king's popularity in France. The people would not see his faults and thought only of the virtues he had shown. The prelates and lords had deserted and betrayed him, they said; it would take the humble people to rescue him, and an immense crowd of serfs and peasants gathered together to cross the sea and go to the king's help. This was the Shepherds' Crusade. These people lived, on the way, by pillage — even murders were committed. It was necessary to deal harshly with them, and they were scattered like wild beasts.

The news of the regent's death (December, 1252) recalled Louis at last to France. In passing Cyprus the king's galley grazed a rock, which carried away fully eighteen feet of her keel. Louis was advised to change ships, and according to Joinville[t] said, "If I leave the ship, five or six hundred people who are on it and who value their life as I do mine will be afraid to stay behind and will land at Cyprus with no hope or means of ever returning to their own country. I prefer to place myself, my wife, and children in danger under the protection of God, than to bring such misfortune on so many people."

Last Years and Death of St. Louis

It was after his return to France that St. Louis made treaties with England and Aragon to determine definitely the boundaries of the three kingdoms. He hoped in making substantial sacrifices to strengthen his hold on the provinces he kept for himself and to prevent the war so frequently provoked by uncertainty with regard to frontiers. This solicitude to do justice to all caused him to be chosen as arbitrator between the king of England and his barons in the controversy over the provisions of Oxford (1264). Louis pronounced in favour of the king, and this time was not successful, for the barons did not hold to his decision, and deposed Henry III. More fortunate elsewhere, he settled a dispute of succession which delivered Flanders from civil war. In the year 1270 St. Louis undertook another crusade in which his faithful Joinville this time refused to engage.[f]

A pacific expedition which should merely intimidate the king of Tunis and induce him to become a convert was not what suited the Genoese in

whose vessels St. Louis was making his passage. Most of the crusaders preferred violence; it was said that Tunis was a rich town, the pillage of which might indemnify them for their dangerous expedition. The Genoese, regardless of the voice of St. Louis, began hostilities by seizing the vessels they found before Carthage. The landing took place without obstacle. The Moors only showed themselves to provoke the Christians, and make them waste their strength in fruitless pursuits. After spending some weary days on the burning shore, the Christians advanced towards the castle of Carthage. All that remained of the great rival of Rome was a fort guarded by two hundred soldiers, and the Saracens who had retreated into the vaults or subterranean chambers were butchered or suffocated by smoke and flames. The king found the ruins full of corpses, which he had removed, that he might take up his quarters there with his followers. He had to wait at Carthage for his brother, Charles of Anjou, before marching on Tunis.

The greater part of the army remained under the African sun, tormented by the thick dust swept from the desert by the winds, and surrounded by the festering remains of the dead. The Moors prowled all around, continually cutting off some stragglers. There were no trees, no vegetable food; for water there was nothing but fetid marshes and cisterns full of disgusting insects. In eight days the plague had broken out. The counts of Vendôme, de la Marche and Viane, Walter de Nemours, marshal of France, the sires de Montmorency, Piennes, Brissac, St. Briçon, and d'Apremont were already dead.

The legate soon followed them. The survivors being no longer able to bury them, they were thrown into the canal, till they covered the whole surface of the water. Meanwhile, the king and his sons were attacked by the malady; the youngest died in his vessel, and it was not till eight days afterwards that the confessor of St. Louis took on himself to acquaint him with the mournful event. The deceased was the most beloved of his children, and his death announced to a dying father was, to the latter, one tie less to earth, a call from God, a temptation to die. Accordingly, without perturbation or regret, he accomplished that last work of a Christian life, making the responses to the litanies and the psalms, dictating a noble and affecting instruction for his son, and receiving even the ambassadors of the Greeks, who came to entreat his intervention in their favour with his brother Charles of Anjou, whose ambition menaced them. He spoke to them with kindness, and promised to exert himself with zeal, if he lived, to keep them in peace; but the next day he himself entered into the peace of God.

That last night of his life he desired them to raise him from his bed and lay him on ashes; and so he died, with his arms constantly folded in the form of a cross. "And on Monday the blessed king stretched his folded hands towards heaven, and said, 'Good Lord God, have mercy on this people that here remaineth, and lead it into its country, that it fall not into the hand of its enemies, and that it be not constrained to renounce thy holy name!' In the night before he deceased, whilst he was reposing, he sighed, and said in a low voice, 'O Jerusalem! O Jerusalem!'"[d]

In his life-time the contemporaries of St. Louis suspected in their simplicity that he was already a saint, and more saintly than the priests. Says the king's confessor, Geoffrey de Beaulieu:[l] "Whilst he lived a word might be said of him which is said of St. Hilary, 'O most perfect layman whose life priests even desire to imitate.' For many priests and laymen desired to be like the blessed king in his virtues and his morals; for it is even thought that he was a saint in his life-time."[d]

The French during this reign accomplished a great achievement without the help of royalty. Charles of Anjou, count of Provence, summoned by the pope against King Manfred, son of the emperor Frederick II, conquered the kingdom of Naples in 1266. But the Latins had five years before lost Constantinople which the Greeks had taken possession of. It was to the interested advice of Charles of Anjou that was due the direction taken by the last crusade, since the submission of the king of Tunis would free Sicily from the constant attempts of the Saracens upon that island.*f*

Hallam's Estimate of St. Louis

Louis IX had methods of preserving his ascendency very different from military prowess. That excellent prince was perhaps the most eminent pattern of unswerving probity and Christian strictness of conscience that ever held the sceptre in any country. There is a peculiar beauty in the reign of St. Louis, because it shows the inestimable benefit which a virtuous king may confer on his people, without possessing any distinguished genius. For nearly half a century that he governed France, there is not the smallest want of moderation or disinterestedness in his actions; and yet he raised the influence of the monarchy to a much higher point than the most ambitious of his predecessors.

To the surprise of his own and later times, he restored great part of his conquests to Henry III, whom he might naturally hope to have expelled from France. It would indeed have been a tedious work to conquer Guienne, which was full of strong places, and the subjugation of such a province might have alarmed the other vassals of his crown. But it is the privilege only of virtuous minds to perceive that wisdom resides in moderate counsels; no sagacity ever taught a selfish and ambitious sovereign to forego the sweetness of immediate power. An ordinary king, in the circumstances of the French monarchy, would have fomented, or at least have rejoiced in the dissensions which broke out among the principal vassals; Louis constantly employed himself to reconcile them. In this, too, his benevolence had all the effects of far-sighted policy. It had been the practice of his last three predecessors to interpose their mediation in behalf of the less powerful classes—the clergy, the inferior nobility, and the inhabitants of chartered towns. Thus the supremacy of the crown became a familiar idea; but the perfect integrity of St. Louis wore away all distrust, and accustomed even the most jealous feudatories to look upon him as their judge and legislator. And as the royal authority was hitherto shown only in its most amiable prerogatives, the dispensation of favour, and the redress of wrong, few were watchful enough to remark the transition of the French constitution from a feudal league to an absolute monarchy.

It was perhaps fortunate for the display of St. Louis' virtues that the throne had already been strengthened by the less innocent exertions of Philip Augustus and Louis VIII. A century earlier, his mild and scrupulous character, unsustained by great actual power, might not have inspired sufficient awe. But the crown was now grown so formidable, and Louis was so eminent for his firmness and bravery, qualities without which every other virtue would have been ineffectual, that no one thought it safe to run wantonly into rebellion, while his disinterested administration gave no one a pretext for it. Not satisfied with the justice of his own conduct, Louis aimed at that act of virtue which is rarely practised by private men, and had perhaps no example among kings—restitution. Commissaries were appointed

to inquire what possessions had been unjustly annexed to the royal domain during the last two reigns. These were restored to the proprietors, or, where length of time had made it difficult to ascertain the claimant, their value was distributed among the poor.

It has been hinted already that all this excellence of heart in Louis IX was not attended with that strength of understanding which is necessary, we must allow, to complete the usefulness of a sovereign. During his minority, Blanche of Castile, his mother, had filled the office of regent with great courage and firmness. But after he grew up to manhood, her influence seems to have passed the limit which gratitude and piety would have assigned to it; and, as her temper was not very meek or popular, it exposed the king to some degree of contempt. He submitted even to be restrained from the society of his wife Marguerite, daughter of Raymond, count of Provence, a princess of great virtue and conjugal affection.



A French Page, Time of Louis IX

But the principal weakness of this king, which almost effaced all the good effects of his virtues, was superstition. It would be idle to sneer at those habits of abstemiousness and mortification which were part to the religion of his age, and, at the worst, were only injurious to his own comfort. But he had other prejudices, which, though they may be forgiven, must never be defended. No man was ever more impressed than St. Louis with a belief in the duty of exterminating all enemies to his own faith. With these he thought no layman ought to risk himself in the perilous ways of reasoning, but to make answer with his sword as stoutly as a strong arm and a fiery zeal could carry that argument. Though, fortunately for his fame, the persecution against the Albigenses, which had been the disgrace of his father's short reign, was at an end before he reached manhood, he suffered a hypocritical monk to establish a tribunal at Paris for the suppression of heresy, where many innocent persons suffered death.[9]

Piety and Christianity of St. Louis

The natural piety of St. Louis but strengthened with his growth. His Christian life, or to reduce the statement to its simplest terms, his daily Christianity, which edified his own century, might very easily fill ours with a sense of shock. But whatever it may leave of such an impression, the history would be incomplete which passed over in silence, or only vaguely

indicated, that which filled so large a part in his life. Let us not, therefore, endeavour to build up for ourselves a St. Louis in accordance with our present-day tastes. Nothing is beautiful but the true, and that truth which the saintly king sought in all things is alone worthy to retrace the likeness of him which should endure.

According to those of his historians who were most intimate with him — the chaplain who accompanied him on one and another of the Crusades, the confessor whom he kept beside him for twenty years, the confessor of his wife Marguerite — he seemed to live for God alone. The offices were read in the king's chapel; almost it might have been the chapel of a monastery or the choir of a cathedral. There he had the Hours sung to him, the Office for the Dead being added by his command. He heard two masses, sometimes three or four; and when the grandees grumbled at his wasting so much time on masses and sermons, he retorted that if he were to lose twice as much time over gaming and hunting no one would complain: a remark which scarcely silenced the murmurs; the barons made no complaint against thus wasting their time with him.

The holy Scriptures and the Fathers were his study. Marguerite's confessor tells us that he caused a candle three feet or thereabouts in height to be lighted, and so long as it lasted read the Bible. He remained for so long a time upon his knees that sometimes his sight and his wits became confused, and, rising up quite dazed, he would ask: "Where am I?" Led back to his room, he would go to bed, but at midnight he was up again and had matins sung by his chaplains (it was no sinecure being king's chaplain in those days!). He would, however, grant to his attendants the repose he refused for himself. So softly did he rise that on several occasions they did not hear him, or, awakened too late, ran after him barefoot.

Every Friday he made his confession, after which he made his confessor administer "the discipline" to him. This discipline was composed of five small iron chains, which he enclosed in an ivory box and carried about with him. He had similar boxes made, with similar contents, and presented them to his children and his friends, counselling them to make use of them. When his confessor struck him too lightly, he urged him to use more force. This advice was not always needed. He had one confessor so full of zeal (*solicitus sibi*) who struck the king in such a manner as to terribly lacerate his flesh, which was extremely delicate. St. Louis, however, held his peace; he never mentioned the matter so long as the confessor lived, but afterwards he spoke of it laughingly to another. His confessors, one should add, were not commonly so zealous, and they reprimanded him for austerities which threatened his delicate health, and urged him to substitute for them alms, which, as a fact, the king did not stint; and they ended by forcing him to renounce the hair-shirt which he wore during Advent and Lent and on the vigils of certain feasts. He renounced it only to wear occasionally a girdle of horse-hair next his skin.

On Good Friday he would visit all the churches barefoot; to keep up appearances he wore shoes from which the soles had been removed. For the adoration of the cross he removed his upper garments, retaining only his vest and coat. With bare feet and uncovered head he advanced a short distance on his knees, bowed himself in prayer, then advanced a little further, and the third time arrived at the cross, prostrated himself as though he too were crucified, and kissed it, bathed in tears. Fervently did he desire the gift of tears. When in singing the litanies the verse was reached: "Grant us a fountain of tears" (*Ut fontem lacrymarum nobis dones*), he used

to say: "Lord, I dare not ask of thee a fount of tears, but only a few drops to refresh my parched and sterile heart."

Are all these details, which have perhaps provoked the pitying smiles of more than one reader, the marks of a feeble intelligence, or do they rather bear witness to a powerful mind that has perfected self-control by keeping the senses in sternest bondage? One can only truly judge of things by their results. His singleness of speech and his aversion to coarse or equivocal language bore eloquent witness to the purity of his heart. Not only did he detest the licentiousness of contemporary poetry, he was also filled with loathing for the popular songs, and innocently recommended one of his equerries who sang them to learn instead the *Ave Maris Stella*. His modesty was excessive. The purity of his youth had never been shadowed by the slightest hint of license, and marriage only served to throw his chastity into higher relief. He demanded moral uprightness from all in his household, and banished without mercy whoso offended against a virtue so dear to his heart.



A French Knight of the Thirteenth Century

On feast days he would bid to his palace two hundred beggars, and himself serve them at table. On the Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays of Advent and Lent, and every Wednesday and Friday throughout the year, he would send for thirteen of them into his own or a neighbouring room and give them food with his own hand, without disgust at their dirtiness. If one among the number was blind the king would give the piece of bread into one of his hands, and guide the other to the bowl containing his portion. If this consisted of fish, he would remove the bones, dip it in the sauce and place the morsel in the blind man's mouth. Before the meal he gave to each person twelve deniers or more according to his need; and if a mother was there with her child, he added more for the little one. On Saturdays he would choose three of the most decrepit, most miserable among the poor, and leading them into his dressing-room, where towels and three basins of water were in readiness, he washed their feet. With reverence he would dry and kiss those feet, whatever their deformity, however hardened by daily contact with the ground; then, kneeling, he would offer them water to wash their hands, give to each forty deniers, and kiss their hands. Nor was this all. Every day, in all weathers, he sent for thirteen other beggars and from among them chose out the three most repulsive, whom he seated at a table drawn up close beside his own.

On many of these points he would not to-day have won the same universal approbation. It is, however, difficult for us to reinvest his figure with the atmosphere by which it must be surrounded before we can form a just judgment; it is far more difficult to place ourselves at the necessary point of view from which we can see him clearly. The modern historian is ofttimes reduced to pleading extenuating circumstances for the saints; for the saints, and St. Louis among them, have this much in common with the

Saviour, that in more than one case they could say with him: "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me."[h]

St. Louis built the asylum of the Quinze Vingts for the blind, several hospitals, and the church of Vincennes. To provide a place for the crown of thorns which the Venetians had turned over to his keeping, he had built by Pierre de Montereau within the precinct of his palace, now the Palais de Justice, the Sainte Chapelle, a shrine of open-work stone. His confessor Robert de Sorbon founded a community under the title of *Congrégation des pauvres maîtres étudiants en théologie.* This congregation became the Sorbonne, the theological faculty so famous throughout the entire Christian world that Mézeray calls it "the permanent council of the Gauls."

Progress of the Monarchy under St. Louis

The house of Capet had made such progress that no lord now dared say to his vassal, "Come fight under my banner against the lord, our king," much as this anarchial privilege was still recognised in the so-called "Establishments" of St. Louis, a compilation of customs in vogue in Orleans. The counts of Flanders and of Brittany and the duke of Guienne, were about the only ones who had not degenerated to the condition of docile vassals; yet feudalism still preserved some immense prerogatives and St. Louis attacked these in the name of justice and religion.

In holding to a strict execution of the ordinances of *quarantaine-le-roi*[1] and *asseurement* (inviolability) he suppressed nearly all private wars. As a Christian he did not approve of these wars which sent to God so many souls ill-prepared to appear before him. As a prince he wished to stop the devastation throughout the country, "the fires and the obstacles placed in the ways of tilling the fields." He forbade in his domains the *duel judiciare* which gave over the settlement and right to the chances of skill and strength. The king's justice usurped the place of individual violence, and proof by witnesses and procedure by writ replaced justice by battle, for "battle is not the path of right."

The lords still dispensed justice throughout their domains. The villein could not escape this judgment, but the vassal had the rights of appeal to the sovereign from the judgment of his lord "in default of right," when the lord refused to render justice; for "false judgments" when the condemned believed himself to have been injured by an unjust sentence. Now the king favoured the custom of direct appeal to his court, which subordinated the lord's justice to that of his own which was final; "for," says Beaumanoir,[p] "since he is sovereign, his court is sovereign"; and the "Establishments" explain why there could be no appeal from the royal decision: "There is no one who can have this right, since the king gets his power from no one but God and himself." The duke of Brittany also retained the final appeal. When a case brought to the justice of the lords interested the king, in whatever way it may be, the bailiff raised the "conflict" as we would

[1 Custom had permitted that when anyone had murdered, wounded, or beaten another the victim or his relatives might immediately avenge themselves by killing, wounding, or beating the offender or any of his relatives, even if the latter were ignorant of what had occurred. The ordinance of *quarantaine-le-roi*, forbade the injured to attack any of the offender's family until after the lapse of forty days (*une quarantaine*). During the interval the offender himself was alone held answerable for his action. Furthermore, if either victim or offender chose to submit his cause to his suzerain he could secure inviolability (*asseurement*), for his goods and person, until a judicial decision had been given. When this inviolability had been demanded its breach was punishable by death.]

say nowadays and laid claim to the judgment, the king not being under the jurisdiction of a lord. These cases were the "royal cases." Legists were most careful to define them so as not to deprive the king's officials of any pretexts for interfering in trials before the feudal courts. It was easy to multiply these at that time and the officials did not fail to do so — taking as much as possible from the province of the lord's justice and adding it to the king's.

At the same time the king's *bourgeoisie* was established. An inhabitant of a piece of seigniorial land might under certain conditions of establishment and residence in a royal city acquire the condition of "king's bourgeois." "I am a king's bourgeois" was equivalent to "I am a Roman citizen." The Roman citizen could only be judged at Rome. The king's bourgeois could not be tried except by the king's officials.

The king's court was on this account much more occupied than formerly. It continued to accumulate every possible prerogative. It was a court of exchequer, and, if it pleased the king, a political council; but it was above all things, in the days of St. Louis, a court of justice. The royal finances were always of a very simple nature; in case of crusades, captivity of the king, knighthood conferred upon the king's eldest son or his marriage, feudal aid was demanded. The revenues of the domain, if well administered, were quite sufficient for royalty to live upon. When it had greater needs and it was necessary to increase revenues of all sorts, the financial prerogatives of the court became more important. The office of the exchequer was detached from it; but in the time of St. Louis justice was the court's business.

But even in this court considerable changes were taking place. The rôle of the great vassals and the crown officials was diminishing, that of the legists was beginning. Now, since judgment was pronounced on written procedures, it was not the knights who had sufficient knowledge and application of mind to deal with the stability of proof and the obscurities of the black-book. The lawyer was necessary to them. At first the barons disdainfully made these plebeian personages sit at their feet, on stools. But in the meeting of ignorance and knowledge the latter quickly asserted its sovereignty. The baron, who had nothing but nonsense to talk, kept quiet before the learned counsellors, and upon these latter soon devolved the direction of judgment; and the fate of the guilty, even of the noblest station, lay in their hands. The king's court, which was always held at Paris, had regular sessions, usually four times a year; and it kept a record of its deliberations which under the name of "Olim" was the beginning of royal jurisprudence.

In the administration of the provinces, St. Louis protected his own power and that of his subjects against any abuses his officials might practice. He forbade bailiffs and seneschals to make presents to the members of the council or receive money from those dependent on them or to loan such any, or to take part in sales, markets, or leases held in the king's name. They were forbidden to purchase any property within their jurisdiction or to marry their sons and daughters without the king's permission. If they disobeyed they were punished both in their property and their persons. When going out of office they were obliged to live forty days within their territory, in order to reply to their successors or to royal inquiries in any charge of misconduct that might be brought against them.

St. Louis sent into the provinces commissioners or royal inquirers, a custom adopted from Charlemagne. These inquirers defended the king's rights and those of his subjects as well. The care which they took to protect the latter against exaction, won them the name of *enquesteurs aux restitutions*.

In all these measures can be recognised the influence of the legists and echoes of Roman administration.

We have noted the organisation of provostships. That of Paris demanded large funds. Therefore several officials joined together to farm it out, and these provosts, according to Joinville, trampled upon the people, sustained their families by the "outrages" they committed, let themselves be corrupted by the rich, and took no notice whatever of the robbers and malefactors who infested Paris and its vicinity.

The king resolved to give in the future "great and high wages to those who should look after his provostship," and sought for someone "who would give good and stiff justice." He chose Étienne Boileau who maintained so well the provostship that no malefactor, robber, or cut-throat dared come to Paris but he was at once hanged and exterminated; and neither lineage, gold, nor silver could save him. Justice and policing were the principal functions of the provost of Paris, who commanded the watch and presided at the tribunal of the Châtelet.

St. Louis struck hard blows at feudalism by the suppression of judiciary duels, the interdiction of private wars, and the establishment of appeal; but he was not for all this a revolutionary king in the sense of Philip the Fair. He repeated constantly that none must "take away any one's rights; but it is," so he said at the head of an ordinance, "the duty of royal power to assure peace and happiness to our subjects." Besides he had that same spirit of justice that is found in Roman law, and which united so well with the principles of Christianity. When he condemns, for example, the duel, he does it because "battle is not the way to determine right"—here is the Roman spirit; and because it "criminally tempts God"—here is the spirit of Christ.

He expected that all would submit to what it seemed to him he was charged by God to establish. His brother the count of Anjou, had, on trial, condemned a knight; and the latter, on appealing to the king's court, was imprisoned by the count. The king let his brother know that there was but one king in France and although Charles was his brother, he would not be treated in any different ways as regarded justice. The count of Anjou had to release his prisoner and came in person to oppose the appeal at the king's court, which, however, was decided in favour of the knight.

One of the most powerful lords of the realm, the lord of Coucy, caused three young men to be hanged for offence against the hunting laws, and although all the barons pleaded for him he was ordered a heavy fine. A lord cried with irony, "If I were king I would hang all the barons; for the first step taken, the second costs nothing." The king heard and called him back. "How, Jean, you say that I should hang all my barons. Certainly I shall not do it, but I will punish them if they do wrong." We have seen how the reputation for equity of the good king was so well established that the English barons in revolt against their king chose Louis as arbitrator, an example followed by the counts of Bar and Luxemburg.

The right of coinage belonged to more than eighty lords who sometimes made bad money. St. Louis decided that his own should have circulation throughout the entire kingdom and alone should be legal tender in the royal domain and those whose lords had not the right of coinage; that the seigniorial coinage should only be legal in the province of the lord who issued it and that this lord could only strike off the *tournois*, and *parisis*,[1] and

[1 The livres of Tours and of Paris; their values being 20 and 25 sous respectively.]

other coins whose legal value was fixed by relation to the *tournois* in the ordinance. Thus the king ruled, in absolute power, in his own domain. He recognised elsewhere seigniorial rights, but limited them in the interest of the subjects whose protector he was. His money circulated everywhere.

It only remained for the king to coin better *parisis* and better *tournois* than those of the lords; which he did. His money, like his justice, was worth more than his vassal's. Another measure was extremely useful to commerce. It made the lords responsible for the policing of the roads through their domains. In Paris he established the royal watch and had drawn up by the provost, Étienne Boileau, the ancient rules concerning the hundred trades which existed in the town, in order to infuse peace and order into industry as he had done in the country. These trades grouped themselves into great corporations; in the fifteenth century all the Parisian merchants formed six bodies of "arts and trades."

St. Louis showed a respectful firmness towards papal authority; we have seen that he did not recognise the pope's right to dispose of crowns. There has even been attributed to him a pragmatic sanction, the foundation of the liberties of the Gallican church, which would have confirmed the liberty of canonical elections, restrained to the most urgent necessities the impositions which the court of Rome could levy upon the French churches and contained the king's vow that they should be established. This ordinance is not authentic, but its principles are those of the government. When the bishops demanded that the king force the excommunicated to submit, he declared that he could not do so without knowing the reasons for excommunication, which made him a judge of the bishops.

St. Louis' lively faith assured him against all fear of the church's wrath; and led him besides to severe practices which seem to us of to-day barbaric. "No one," he said, "unless he be learned clerk or perfect theologian, should dispute with the Jews, but may do so with the layman who is heard to slander the Christian faith, and defend it not only with words but with his good drawn sword, striking the miscreant across the body or even letting it cut him." He punished blasphemers by running red-hot irons through their tongues.

He loved to recall that on one occasion during his minority, when pursued up to the very walls of Paris by rebel vassals, he had been saved by the city soldiers who came to his rescue: He always took great interest in the welfare of the large towns, but without sacrificing to them the new needs of society. He conferred a number of charters, and amended others. Communal independence never seemed to him better than feudal liberties, and he favoured the transformation of the communes into royal cities which were dependent on and watched over by the supreme power, while their internal affairs were attended to by officials chosen in free election. An ordinance of 1256 prescribes that the communes name four candidates among themselves from whom the king shall choose a mayor who shall come to Paris once a year to give account of his stewardship.

Thus little by little was established the principle that it was the king's prerogative to deal with the communes and that all owed him allegiance above everyone else. Thus the communes gradually disappeared and with them the proud sentiments, the strong ideas of right and liberty which sustained the men who had founded and defended them. The "third estate" was beginning.

Through his undermining of feudal and communal independence, and through his strong ruling with regard to the church, St. Louis pointed the

way of absolute power to French royalty. He rendered it still another service. The remembrance of his virtues did not perish with him. Venerated in his life-time as a saint, he was canonised after death. He put the seal of sanctification, so to speak, upon French royalty, and his descendants were fond of invoking at the head of their decrees the name and example of "Monsieur St. Louis."

ASPECTS OF THIRTEENTH CENTURY CIVILISATION

In proportion as the Middle Ages advanced, national individuality took more definite shape. Intellectual life had been during a protracted period confined almost exclusively to religious circles, and had been given expression in the universal language — Latin. Accordingly the beginning of the thirteenth century saw only three active established literatures — in Germany, in the north and in the south of France; the last having preceded the others and served them as models. This was the literature of the *langue d'oc*, also called Provençal, which overflowed the Pyrenean borders into Christian Europe, passed over the Alps into the whole of Italy, and awakened the muse that lay sleeping on the banks of the Ebro, as on those of the Po and the Arno. Brilliant, sonorous, harmonious, full of imagery and movement, it was unexcelled as the language of love and battle songs. Bernard de Ventadour, Bertram de Born, and Richard Cœur de Lion moulded it with a skill and ardour worthy of Tyrtæus. The songs of Bertram de Born, above all, were like swords, dazzling and penetrating; the passion of war flamed in them like fire. This language of the south, into which something of the Arabian accent has passed, lent itself gracefully to the requirements of the courts of love presided over by ingenious tribunals of noble dames.

But the continued development of the north of France gave the preponderance to its idiom. The Normans carried it into Italy, where it failed to establish itself; and to England, where it prevailed during three centuries. By the crusaders it was everywhere disseminated. While the intellectual fame of Paris attracted there the eminent minds of the whole Catholic world, the vulgar tongue which the doctors disdained extended its empire well beyond the frontiers. We must add also that French genius, so often accused of epic sterility, poured over into the adjacent countries a flood of great poetry. The troubadours had been mute since the Albigensian crusade had drowned in blood the civilisation of the *langue d'oc;* and no more were heard the virile accents of Bernard de Ventadour or of Bertram de Born, nor the melodious lyrics of the *jeux partis.*[1] But north of the Loire the *trouvères* still composed heroic songs — veritable epics, which were translated or imitated in Italy, England, and Germany.

But these epic cycles were exhausted: the heroic ode disappeared. Robert Wace, "clerk of Caen," composed about 1155 the *Roman de Brut*, a legendary history of Britain. Christian de Troyes, who wrote after 1160, spun out a diluted version of the Arthurian legend in a long poem in lines of eight syllables, while the same tale was given a religious twist by another school of poets by adding the history of the Holy Grail. The aspect of the times was mirrored in the poem with its double face — chivalry and piety. The naïve inspiration of the song of Roland was lost; the new school

[1] The disquisitions of the *troubadours* or the *trouvères* on questions of gallantry were called *jeux partis;* whence grew those "courts of love" in which were tried, before tribunals of noble ladies, complicated cases and subtle questions. These "courts of love" were of course but a poetical fiction, never a serious or permanent institution.

subtilised, ran after novelties, or rummaged among the classics. The story of Ulysses and that of the Argonauts, borrowed from *The Thebaid* of Statius, furnished tales which could not fail to please those Christian Ulysseses whom the Crusades had sent wandering in Asia. The Trojan War, the sorceress Medea, and Alexander, attracted the *trouvères* of this period. They had already begun to imitate the style of the ancients. Thus the nature of the epic was altered and a transition took place from primitive composition to the diverse styles of advanced civilisation. The epic was divided: the elements dealing with the passions were blended into allegorical romance; the narrative elements, into prose history. Analysis and realism took the place of spontaneous and poetic inspiration.

Guillaume de Lorris, who died in 1260, began the famous *Roman de la Rose*, whose personages were abstract qualities — Reason, Good-will, Danger, Treason, Baseness, Avarice. Jean de Meun continued it later, after another transformation had given birth to satire. The fable flourished already, having derived its origin from that very romance: animals played the rôles of passions, of social conditions; and the tale of *Renard*, developed in its turn from the others, made its appearance, in 1236, as the comedy of the period. Rutebœuf offers the first example of the professional poet, ill remunerated, perishing with cold, agape with hunger; yet, in the depths of this misery, gay, daring, caustic, he wrote upon all sorts of subjects in the frank, open style which heralded Villon. Language acquires in his hands skill and power; it is more mellow and more tender than that of Guillaume de Lorris or from the lips of the famous count of Champagne or of Marie of France.

The most noteworthy event in French literature in the thirteenth century was the appearance of prose. The first prose writers were not, be it understood, professional historians, but two noblemen, both involved in the events they depicted. Geoffroy de Villehardouin, marshal of Champagne, has left us the history of the Fourth Crusade in the *Conquête de Constantinople*, in which he himself figured. He writes as a soldier, his style being firm and brief, not without a touch of military stiffness; he invents little, goes straight ahead, from one attack to the next, with a brief exclamation when encountering some object which astonishes him. The lord of Joinville, also seneschal of Champagne, exhibits in his *Mémoires* a greater suppleness of style, a more marked refinement of mind; he observes, reflects, and talks upon all subjects, discussing his personal sentiments as freely as the events of war. He was the foreshadowing of Froissart, as only the councillor and friend of the pious and excellent Louis IX could be.[c] "In point of time," says Villemain, "the narrative of Joinville is perhaps the first monument of genius in the French language, — a work of genius being, as I understand it, one having a high degree of originality of diction; a characteristic and expressive physiognomy; in short, a work that has been done by one man and that could not have been done by another. Such is the book of Joinville."[o]

France was indebted to St. Louis for the multiplication of manuscripts. It is remarkable that he should first, while in the East, have resolved to establish a library at Paris. Hearing that the soldan of Egypt was indefatigably collecting from all parts, and causing to be transcribed or translated, the works of the ancient philosophers, "he was afflicted," says a chronicler of the times, "to perceive more wisdom in the sons of darkness than in the children of light." He began to collect manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments, and of the fathers, which he caused to be multiplied by transcription; all these he placed in the royal chapel at Paris, making them

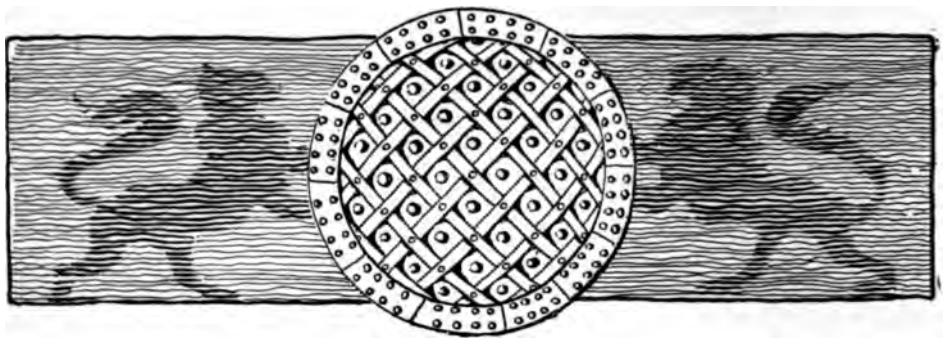
accessible to professors and students. The same liberality was shown by the Dominicans of Toulouse, by the bishops of Beauvais and Paris, by the archbishop of Narbonne, by many chapters, and by more monasteries. The professors of the University of Paris, too, were eminent enough to draw students from all parts of Europe: in fact, such names as Alexander de Hales, Albertus Magnus, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Buonaventura, would have conferred splendour on any establishment. With inferior fame, but probably with equal utility, the universities of Bourges, Toulouse, Orleans, and Angers — foundations of this century — imitated the example of the capital.[a]

The thirteenth century marks the triumph of the style of architecture so improperly called Gothic. Its characteristic is the arch. This form, at no other time and in no other country employed with such profusion and prominence as in Western Europe during the Middle Ages, has been attributed primarily to the Goths, whence its name; afterwards, with as little justification, to the Arabs. Undoubtedly pilgrims to the Orient, among them many ecclesiastics, brought back from their travels impressions and souvenirs which left their traces upon Christian edifices; numerous churches were built after the pattern of the Holy Sepulchre. Mosaic and colour alternation appear also to be importations from the East. As to the arch, if it is much in evidence in the Arabian style, it is also prominent in that of the Byzantines; it is of all times and all countries, from the tomb of Atreus and the gates of the Pelasgian cities in Italy to the constructions of the savages of Nubia and America. It is simply an elementary form and easy to construct in building vaulted roofs, which require more precision than science.

Vulgar and irregular at first, the arch became monumental little by little — by natural progression, by a gradual refinement of line, by a greater diversity of ornament, by the ribs and columns which began to adorn it. It lent itself marvellously, moreover, as a delineation of the celestial vault, to the mysticism of the Christians and to the passionate soaring of their souls toward heaven: thus soared the mass of Gothic columns, straight, bold, fearfully light, and appearing higher in proportion as the vaulted roof was less open. It was not in the formal Roman *Midi*, it was in the mystic North that the Gothic spread and attained perfection.

The new style, born north of the Loire, crossed the Channel, the Rhine, and the Alps; and the colonies of French artists transplanted it to Canterbury, to Utrecht, to Milan, to Cologne, to Strasburg, to Ratisbon — even into Sweden. A crude but ingenuous statuary adorned portals, galleries, and cloisters; and the art of glass-painting possessed, for the production of magic effects on glazed windows, secrets which we are only just beginning to recover. Miniature paintings adorned the missals, and the books of Hours have preserved to us some exquisite masterpieces.

Astrology was one of the fads of this period; it reached its highest development in the sixteenth century, and was not wholly extinguished till the seventeenth. The astrologers pretended to read in the stars the destiny of human lives. Another folly was the search of the alchemists for the philosopher's stone — that is to say, the method of creating gold by the transmutation of metals. These dreams, however, led to happy results: the astrologers from much star-gazing discovered the laws that governed the movements of those bodies; the alchemists found in their crucibles — not gold, indeed, but new substances, or new properties of those already known. So were discovered the process of forming salts by distillation, powerful acids, enamels, and convex glasses leading to the making of spectacles.[c]



CHAPTER IV

PHILIP III TO THE HOUSE OF VALOIS

[1270–1328 A.D.]

Of all epochs of French history, the second half of the thirteenth century appears to be that in which the subordination (of the people to the crown) was most complete. — DARESTE.[k]

PHILIP (III) THE BOLD (1270–1285 A.D.)

LITTLE is known of the reign of St. Louis' eldest son in spite of its length of fifteen years. It began under the walls of Tunis whence Philip III brought home his father's body, after forcing a treaty upon the Mohammedans in which they recognised themselves tributary to the king of Sicily and agreed to pay the costs of the war. One can, however, still follow the ascending march of royalty under this prince, who, without any new war, and by extinction of several feudal lineages, reunited to his domain Valois, Poitou, and the counties of Toulouse and Venaissin. But Philip gave up to the pope this last fief and half of Avignon. The count of Foix, vanquished and a prisoner in his own capital, was compelled to promise faithful obedience and cede a portion of his territory. The dominion of the king of France thus approached the Pyrenees; and it finally crossed them. Philip made a match between his eldest son and the heiress of Navarre and if he did not succeed in placing on the throne of Castile a prince subservient to his influence, or in setting the crown of Aragon on the head of his second son Charles, at least he showed his arms in Catalonia where he took the stronghold of Gerona. Thus the Capetian dynasty, triumphant at home since the days of Louis VI, tried to become so abroad. But the time for this was not ripe.

The expedition to Catalonia, which turned out badly, had no other motive than that of family interest. Philip wished to punish Don Pedro, king of Aragon, for his support of the rebellious Sicilians against Charles of Anjou after the massacre of all the French citizens in the island, which had taken place during vespers on Easter Monday. ("The Sicilian Vespers," 1282.)

An ordinance of Philip III, drawn up in 1274, obliged the advocates in the royal courts to take oath each year that they would defend none but just cases. The first example of a commoner made noble by the king will be found in the letters of ennoblement issued by Philip III to his silversmith Raoul, in 1272, if the fact is absolutely certain.

PHILIP (IV) THE FAIR (1285–1314 A.D.)

Philip IV, surnamed the Fair, was but seventeen when he succeeded his father in 1285. He ridded himself, as far as possible by treaties, of futile wars, and occupied himself in place of conquest with increasing his domains by acquisitions within his reach. His marriage with the heiress of Navarre and Champagne had only been worth two great provinces to him. A decree of parliament which despoiled the heirs of Hugh de Lusignan secured him La Marche and Angoumois. Then his second son married the heiress of Franche-Comté; thus through marriage, escheat, or conquest all France came little by little into the royal domain. But powerful vassals still remained — the duke of Brittany, the count of Flanders, and especially the duke of Guienne. Philip began by attacking the last. He was a formidable adversary since he was at the same time king of England.



PHILIP III

Fortunately Edward I, who had just subdued the Welsh and was now threatening the independence of Scotland, was too much occupied in his own island to come over to the continent, and owing to this the royal army was able to make rapid progress in Guienne. A French fleet went to pillage Dover; and another army led by the king in person made its way into Flanders, where the count had declared for the king of England, and beat the Flemings at Furnes (Veurne) (1297). The intervention of Pope Boniface VIII established a peace between the two kings which was sealed by a marriage. A daughter of Philip the Fair wedded the son of Edward I and gave the English house rights to the throne of France which Edward III in due time asserted (1299). By this peace the two kings gave up their allies, Philip the Scotch, and Edward the count of Flanders. The latter in terror hastened to place himself under the protection of Philip and Flanders was reunited to the domain (1300).

The whole French court went to visit the new acquisition. It was received with great pomp; the Flemings, to do honour to their noble visitors, donned their best attire and displayed all their riches. The entrance into Bruges was especially magnificent. The bourgeois wives showed such gold and jewels in their toilets that the queen felt her woman's vanity wounded. "I thought," she said, "there was but one queen of France; now I see six hundred." Flanders was in truth the richest country in Europe because it was there that the people worked hardest. In that fruitful land men had sprung up like crops, towns were numerous, and the population active and industrious, devoted, like the Guienne towns — especially Bordeaux, because the English bought their wines — to England, whence came the wool necessary to their manufactures. Flemish cloth sold throughout the whole of Christendom as far as Constantinople, and the towns of the Low Countries formed the market where the productions of the north from the Baltic were

exchanged for those of the south brought from Venice and the east of Italy down the Rhine.

On a soil which it had taken a thousand canals to rescue from the sea, among the scores of stoutly walled cities, with a population accustomed to hard work, but none the less proud of its numbers, strength, and wealth, chivalry had had small chance to play its game, and there was little feudalism in Flanders. Every town had its privileges and it was not safe to tamper with them.

New War with Flanders (1302–1304 A.D.)

Philip had appointed James de Châtillon governor of Flanders — a man who did not know how to treat a conquered people, especially such a rich one. The people, rather intolerant and accustomed to more consideration from their counts, rebelled. In Bruges alone three thousand French were put to death. Philip sent Robert of Artois with a large army to avenge this deed. Twenty thousand Flemings awaited it bravely behind a canal near Courtrai. Before the fight the Flemings confessed their sins, the priest said high mass, and all, bowing down, took some earth and put it in their mouths, swearing thus to fight to the death for their country's freedom. This gathering of a whole army usually augurs badly for its assailants. The latter advanced in bad order, sure of victory and not giving those common people the credit of believing that they would dare look them in the face. In vain the constable Raoul de Nesle cautioned prudence. He was asked if he was afraid. "Sir," he replied to Count Robert, "if you come where I go, you will be well in the front," and he spurred his horse forward at all speed. They did not even take the precaution to reconnoitre the Flemings' position. The first ranks of the heavy columns of knights, advancing at full speed, had no sooner fallen into the canal that covered the enemy's lines than those just behind pressed by the rear were precipitated upon them, and then the Flemings had only to plunge their long lances into the confused mass of men and horses to kill with perfect safety to themselves. A sortie which they made from the two ends of the canal completed the rout. Two hundred nobles of high degree and six thousand soldiers perished. And what was most humiliating was that the duke of Burgundy, the counts of Saint-Pol and Clermont, with two thousand hauberts, fled, leaving the constable, count of Artois, and so many noble warriors, beaten, maimed, and killed in the hands of the common people (1302).

The battle of Mansurah had already shown the undisciplined impetuosity and military incapacity of the knights, but this occurred in the Orient and distance had helped to preserve the reputation of the vanquished; but the battle of Courtrai, lost by the flower of French chivalry to the common people, made a great sensation without, however, curing the nobility of their mad presumption. The defeats of Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt came from the same causes. Stripped by royalty of its privileges, the feudal nobility lost on the battle-field the prestige with which it had long been surrounded and saw, to complete its own ruin, arise at its very side another army — that of the king and the people.

Philip the Fair took energetic measures to repair the disaster of Courtrai. He forced nobles and bourgeois to bring to the royal mint their gold and silver plate, for which he paid in debased coinage. He ordered each property yielding 100 livres of rent to provide one horseman, every one hundred villein families to provide six foot-sergeants, and every commoner having 25 livres income to serve in person. He sold many serfs their freedom and

many commoners titles of nobility. By this means he collected in two months ten thousand mounted and sixty thousand men on foot. It was a royal effort and it was a great one, but that of the people was greater still. From the Flemish towns there issued this time eighty thousand fighters. With two such opposing armies the contest must be terrible and decisive; they felt this and not wishing to take any risks, the year 1302 was spent in trying to get thoroughly acquainted with the situation. Philip was then at the height of his quarrel with Boniface VIII and a new defeat would be fatal to him; he even let the Flemings take the offensive the following year (1303). But the pope died the same year and Philip attacked Flanders by land and sea. His fleet defeated the Flemish at Zieriksee and he himself avenged at Mons-en-Pévêle, or Mons-en-Puelle, the defeat of Courtrai. He thought the enemy exterminated, but in a few days they were back as numerous as ever, asking a new battle. "But it rains Flemings," cried the king. He preferred to treat rather than fight again. They promised him money and ceded Douai, Lille, Béthune, Orchies with all Walloon — that is to say French-speaking Flanders between the Lys and the Schelde. To this the king gave them back their count, who promised nothing more than feudal homage.

Thus French royalty receded before Flemish democracy as did German royalty almost at the same period before Swiss democracy. The communes of France remained isolated, and succumbed; in Flanders and in Switzerland they united and triumphed.[b]

The Quarrel between Philip and Boniface VIII

The complaints made by a certain section of the French clergy to the holy see in 1296, against what they designated as the exactions of Philip the Fair, met with a far better reception than did similar complaints from England, where Edward was employing much more vigorous methods than those of his rival to obtain subsidies from the clergy.

It was a great opportunity for Pope Boniface VIII, and he did not let it slip. The bull, *Clericis laïcos* (1296), was familiar throughout Christendom. This bull, forbidding the clergy to pay taxes to temporal rulers, was too sweeping to be enforced. Boniface realised that, and forestalled the objections that it could not fail to raise. All that was too peremptory in the preceding bull was corrected in the one beginning *Ineffabilis amor*. The king might raise subsidies among the clergy, with the pope's consent, who, if the kingdom were menaced, would order them to contribute to its defence even unto the selling of the sacred vessels. In the same bull Boniface demanded an explanation of the prohibition recently made by the king against exporting gold, silver, and merchandise out of the kingdom, a prohibition which threatened to dry up one of the principal sources of revenue of Rome.

The edict which is universally regarded as Philip's retort to the bull *Clericis laïcos*, was not aimed at the pope, for it was issued in the month of April, a few days after the drawing up of the bull and before its contents could possibly have become known to the king of France. It did not apply solely to money, but forbade also the exportation of arms, horses, and other things, its object being to damage England and Flanders with which Philip was at war. Similar edicts were issued on several occasions during this reign. In this same bull Boniface threatened Philip with excommunication. The king and his councillors were furious at this liberty.

In 1297, came a fresh prohibition to export gold and silver, fresh fears on the part of the pope, fresh explanations from Philip. In the midst of all

this the French bishops wrote to Boniface praying him to grant the king a tithe on all the churches. The clergy began to realise that they could not abstain from contributing to the defence of the country. Abandoned by a portion of the French clergy, Boniface made fresh concessions. In the bull beginning *Romana mater ecclesia* he even granted permission to raise, in cases of necessity, ecclesiastical tithes, with the consent of the clergy but without consulting the holy see. The bull *Noveritis nos* went still farther: it handed over to the king, if he had attained his majority, and to his council if he were still a minor, the responsibility of deciding as to which were cases of necessity, and the right of taxing the clergy even though the pope had not first been consulted. It concluded by declaring that the holy see had never had any intention of making an attempt upon the rights, liberties, freedoms, and customs of the kingdom, the king, or the barons. This compliance on the part of Boniface VIII, his sudden sweetness, must not be attributed altogether to feelings of benevolence towards Philip the Fair; they are explained principally by the difficult position in which the pope found himself in his own states.

Harmonious relations continued between the king and the pope; nevertheless certain incidents occurred to mar them. Boniface had summoned the bishop of Laon to Rome to give account of his administration; the king thereupon affected to consider his benefice as vacant and proceeded to appropriate to himself the revenues according to the royal prerogative. A fresh cause for reciprocal discontent was found in the complaints made by the bishops against the collection of the first-fruits granted to the king.

One event to which no one attached any importance took place about that time, changing the already unsettled feelings of Boniface into hostility. This was the alliance formed at Vaucouleurs in 1299 between Philip and Albert, king of the Romans, who had been excommunicated for having dethroned Adolphus of Nassau — a very threatening alliance for the papacy. The news of the negotiations between Philip and Albert spread consternation in Rome; a false rumour announcing a rupture between them was received with joy. Boniface conceived the idea of holding a conference with the kings of France and England and the count of Flanders — the only means, in his eyes, by which to establish peace on a solid basis. He did not dream of summoning them to Rome. He knew Philip and Edward well enough to be aware that they would regard it simply as officious interference on his part. So he determined to go himself to some neutral territory. He had even got so far as to make overtures to Philip the Fair under these conditions when a serious malady, which caused him excessive pain, coupled with his great age, compelled him to renounce the scheme.

The Flemish ambassadors judged this moment to be a favourable one for making themselves heard, by flattering the pope's notions of supremacy and exciting his suspicions against Philip the Fair. They forwarded to Boniface a memorial in which they prayed his support and intervention, and sought to reassure him as to the mightiness of this sovereign power which they attributed to him by appeals to the holy Scriptures. Boniface was only too ready to listen to insinuations which fell in with his own hopes and ambitions.

However, causes of complaint against Philip continued to accumulate, among others being his usurpation of the county of Melgueil, which belonged to the bishop of Maguelonne, and the refusal of the viscount of Narbonne to do homage to the archbishop who was his over-lord. The pope let drop some severe remarks, and despatched Bernard de Saisset, bishop of

[1301 A.D.]

Pamiers, to invite the king to restore the consecrated land. Philip, exasperated by the bishop of Pamiers, allowed him to return to his diocese; but he instituted a secret inquiry about him to which evidence was contributed by the bishops and barons of the south. He was accused of having purloined Languedoc from the crown for the purpose of re-uniting it to Aragon; his real offence was his hatred of the king. Bernard was arrested at Pamiers by the vidame of Amiens, and arraigned before the king and an assembly of barons at Senlis, October 14th, 1301. So haughty was his defence that the whole assembly rose to its feet and clamoured for his death. Within an ace of being massacred, he flung himself on the compassion of the archbishop of Narbonne, his metropolitan, who was present, as well as the bishops of Béziers and Maguelonne. The archbishop took him under his protection and made himself answerable for him. This proceeding of Philip was contrary to the laws of the church: a bishop cannot be brought up for judgment before a lay court; in the same way, the councils have not the right to judge him without the intervention of the pope, who must authorise the proceedings.



ANCIENT CHURCH NEAR ROUEN, BUILT IN THE ROCK

Philip despatched Peter de Flotte to Rome to demand the punishment of Saisset. The ambassador declared that his master did not wish to avail himself of his right to punish a man whose crimes rendered him unworthy of the priesthood and of the protection accorded to the clergy; but that he desired to show the pope a token of deference and respect by handing over to him the charge of avenging the insult offered to God as the author of all legitimate authority, to the king as a son of the church, and to the kingdom as a very considerable portion of Christendom. He further requested Boniface to declare Bernard stripped of his episcopal dignity and of all clerical privileges. It was in vain that Flotte urged and demanded a reply; he received none, and returned raging to France.

Boniface suspended the privileges accorded by himself and his predecessors to the crown of France, and convoked, for November 1st, 1302, a general council at Rome, in order to put an end to the oppressions endured by the French clergy. The king was invited either to attend in person or to send someone to defend him. The bull *Ausculta fili* indicated the superiority claimed by Boniface over Philip. "God, in laying upon us the yoke of apostolic servitude, has placed us above kings and empires, to uproot, destroy, annihilate, disperse, build and plant in his name; dearly beloved son, do not allow yourself to be persuaded that you are not subject to the supreme head of the church, for such an opinion would be folly." He further accused the king of tyrannising over his subjects, oppressing the church, and offending the nobles. In conclusion he invites him to turn his attention to the

deplorable condition of the Holy Land and to prepare a crusade. Another bull, *Secundum divina*, enjoined Philip to set Saisset at liberty and let him return to Rome. The king drove him out of France, and prepared to obtain a great demonstration in his own favour, in opposition to the pretensions of Boniface, by summoning the first states-general. By acting in this manner Philip was only defending his crown: his right was obvious, he needed but to claim it and exercise it with dignity. His cause was good, but he had the misfortune to sully it by falsehood and violence; in this, doubtless, following the advice of the lawyers who surrounded him.

The Sunday after Candlemas (February, 1302) the king solemnly burned the bull *Ausculta fili*. The defeat of the French army at Courtrai, in the month of July, gave confidence to Boniface without disheartening Philip. In the month of December Philip sent the bishop of Auxerre to Rome to signify to Boniface that, in conjunction with the king of England, he had renounced his arbitration. Outwardly Philip was most deferential towards the pope. While all this was going on grave news came from Rome. The council summoned by Boniface had met on All Saints' Day, 1302, several French bishops having responded to the pope's summons, despite the king's prohibitions. Philip had seized all their worldly goods, and a decree issued November 18th, doubtless at the instigation of the council, ratified the doctrine of the papal superiority.

Boniface directed those French bishops who had not taken part in the council to present themselves at Rome within three months' time. Philip forbade them to leave the kingdom, and set guards at all the passes into Germany and Italy. By the king's wish Cardinal de Saint-Marcellin (the pope's legate) summoned a council in France. Boniface recapitulated all his grievances against Philip, and called upon him to clear himself. He accused him among other things of coining false money and of burning the bull *Ausculta fili*. Philip's answer was moderate and conciliatory. He expressed his wish to maintain, as his ancestors had done, the union between France and the holy see, and concluded by entreating Boniface not to meddle with him in the legitimate exercise of his rights; he offered to refer the matter to the decision of the duke of Brittany or of the duke of Burgundy, who were particularly agreeable to him. The pope declared this answer to be insufficient, and complained bitterly of it to the bishop of Auxerre and to the king's brother, Charles of Valois, who for nearly two years had lived in Italy with the title "champion of the holy see," and whom Philip had lately recalled.

On the 12th of March, 1303, an assembly of barons, prelates, and lawyers was held at the Louvre in the presence of the king. William de Plasian (or, according to Dareste[k] and Martin,[c] the chancellor, William de Nogaret) read aloud a document in which were set forth accusations against Boniface:

"He is a heretic; he does not believe in the immortality of the soul or in the life everlasting: he has said that he would sooner be a dog than a Frenchman; he does not believe in the real presence in the Eucharist. He has approved of a book by Armand de Villeneuve, which book has been condemned and burned; he has set up images of himself in the churches to the end that he may be worshipped; he has a familiar spirit who advises him; he consults sorcerers; he has openly preached that the pope cannot be guilty of simony; he traffics in benefices; he sows strifes everywhere; he has said that the French are of the Patarins (Albigenses); he has ordered murders; he has forced priests to reveal confessions; he has nourished a bitter hatred of the king of France. Before his election he was heard to say

[1303 A.D.]

that if he did become pope he would destroy Christianity or lower the French pride; he has prevented peace between England and France; he has urged the king of Sicily to massacre all French; he strengthened the king of Germany on condition of his humbling the arrogance of the French, who, he pretended, boasted that they recognised no superior in temporal matters, in which they lied in their throats; that if an angel from heaven were to tell him that France was not subject to him, he would shriek curses against both him and the emperor. He has brought about the ruin of the Holy Land, having confiscated all the money intended for its aid, that he might give it to his relatives, of whom he has made marquises, counts, and barons, and for whom he has built castles; he has driven out the nobility of Rome; he has broken up marriages; he has made a cardinal of one of his nephews who is but an ignorant fellow and who was married, and has forced the wife to take the veil in a convent; he has done Celestine, his predecessor, to death in prison."

On the 13th of April Boniface declared Philip to be excommunicate if he persisted in not submitting himself to the holy see. He commissioned Nicholas de Bienfaite, archdeacon of Coutances, to bear to Cardinal de Saint-Marcellin the bull which cut off the king from communion with the church. But the king, warned of the archdeacon's mission, had him arrested at Troyes and thrown into prison. His bull was taken from him; in point of fact it was not to have been fulminated except in the case of Philip's remaining deaf to a final summons. In vain the legate protested; no one listened to him; the goods of all prelates absent from the kingdom were sequestrated. Realising that he compromised himself uselessly by remaining any longer, he quitted France.

On the 31st of May Boniface, who had pardoned Albert of Austria and had recognised him as king of the Romans, launched a bull in which the nobles, churches, and *communes* of the metropolises of Lyons, Tarantaise, Embrun, Besançon, Aix, Arles, and Vienne, of Burgundy, Barrois, Dauphiné, Provence, of the county of Forcalquier, the principality of Orange, and the kingdom of Arles, provinces held of the kingdom, were ordered to break such ties of vassalage and obedience as they had been able to contract prejudicial to the emperor, and to release themselves from such oaths of obedience as they had sworn.

It was almost equivalent to dismembering France. On the 13th of June a great assembly took place at the Louvre at which the king was present. The counts of Evreux, Saint-Pol, and Dreux, and William de Plasian, demanded that the church should be governed by a legitimate pope. Boniface was charged anew with all the old crimes and infamies. The king was entreated, in his capacity as "defender of the faith," to work for the convoking of a general council. To this he consented. On the 24th of June, St. John Baptist's Day, an immense crowd of people gathered in the palace gardens; there the king's challenge to the future council was read.

At last, on September 8th, Boniface, in the bull *Petri solio excelso*, pronounced against Philip the excommunication he had courted. All the world knows how, in defiance of public liberties, Boniface was arrested at Anagni, on the evening before the very day on which the excommunication of the French king was to have been publicly posted.[d]

One of Philip's agents, William (Guillaume) de Nogaret whose grandfather had been burned as an Albigensian, had been sent to Italy. He came to an understanding with Sciarra Colonna, a Roman noble and the pope's mortal enemy. Boniface was at that time in his native city of Anagni. By

dint of money Nogaret won over the chief of the military forces of Anagni, and one morning entered the place with four hundred mounted armed men and some hundreds of foot-soldiers. At the noise they made in the town and the cries of "Death to the pope!" "Long live the king of France!" Boniface believed his last hour had come. But showing in spite of his age (he was eighty-six years old) an uncommon degree of agility, he got into his pontifical robes, and seated himself on his throne, the tiara on his head, the cross in one hand and the keys of St. Peter in the other. Thus he awaited his assassins. The latter called upon him to abdicate. "Here is my neck and here is my head," he replied; "betrayed like Jesus Christ, if I must die like him at least I shall die a pope." A story ran that Sciarra Colonna dragged him from his throne, struck him across the face with his gauntlet, and would have killed him had not Nogaret interfered, saying: "Oh thou wretched pope, witness and consider the goodness of my lord, the king of France, who, far from thee as is his kingdom, guards and defends thee through me." [But the story of Colonna's violence seems quite unfounded.[1]]

Nogaret hesitated, however, about dragging the old man out of Anagni. The people had time to recover from their astonishment. The townspeople armed themselves, the peasants rushed in, and the French were driven from the town. The pope, fearing they had put poison in his food, remained three days without eating. A short time after, he died of shame and anger, at the humiliating insults he had received. His successor, Benedict XI, tried to avenge him by excommunicating Nogaret, Colonna, and all those who had helped them. The excommunication reached up to the king. A month after the publication of the bull, Benedict died, perhaps poisoned. This time Philip took measures to make himself master of the election of the new pontiff. Bertrand d'Agoust (de Goth), archbishop of Bordeaux, was elected after he had promised the king to comply with the royal wishes. The new pope, who took the name of Clement V, caused himself to be consecrated at Lyons, and abandoning Rome, fixed his residence in 1308 at Avignon, a possession of the holy see beyond the Alps, where he soon found himself under the hand and will of the king of France. His successors remained there until 1376. The sojourn of the popes at Avignon, which so upset the church, has been called the Babylonish Captivity. This sojourn was memorable in connection with the history of Philip IV.

[1 Boutaric,[d] who has made a special study of the reign of Philip the Fair, bases his account of the remarkable events at Anagni on the narratives of Rinaldo de Supino and of Nogaret[l] himself rather than on those of Giovanni Villani[m] and Walsingham,[n] the source of most modern historians. Nogaret's alleged speech is from the chronicle of St. Denis.(o)

Nogaret says that Philip had sent him to Rome to demand the summoning of a council, but Boniface in fear of the hostile population had retired to his native Anagni. Nogaret learned of the impending excommunication of his master and determined to prevent it at all costs. The Ghibellines of Romagna listened to his plan, and Rinaldo de Supino, their leader and his friend, agreed to accompany Nogaret to Anagni and bring Boniface to terms.

But Nogaret was compelled to take full leadership and promise the protection of France, from all consequences, temporal or spiritual, to his allies. Sciarra Colonna, the pope's mortal enemy, now joined the scheme. All of this would indicate that Nogaret acted on his own responsibility in the matter of the descent on Anagni, wishing only to protect the king of France from the curse of excommunication, and that the latter was in no way connected with the conception of the affair. As to the events at Anagni, Boutaric says:

"There are fables that Colonna struck the pope in the face with his gauntlet; that he was tied to a donkey with his face toward its tail and paraded through Anagni in the midst of insults; but all these stories should be rejected. It seems certain that the person of Boniface was respected. Nogaret contented himself with holding him captive and pestering him to consent to the convoking of the council. Boniface was immovable; Nogaret was at his wits' end. After a lapse of three days the people, ashamed of their treachery, came to demand Boniface. Nogaret was obliged to flee." Dareste[k] holds Colonna guiltless of violence but thinks that others might have injured the pope but for Nogaret.]



COLONNA INSULTING POPE BONIFACE VIII

Painted especially for "The Historians' History of the World" by R. E. Miller

[1307 A.D.]

Sentence of the Templars (1307 A.D.)

Villani relates a mournful scene — the ominous interview between pope and king in the forest of St. Jean d'Angély where one sold his tiara and the other bought it. This meeting did not take place, but conditions were certainly proposed and accepted. One of them was nothing less than the destruction of the military order of the Templars. The wealth of these warrior monks, now of no use to them since it was no longer expended in armament against the infidel, had tempted the king's greed, always keen-scented for money, and their powers stood in the way of his despotism. There were 15,500 knights with a great multitude of servant knights, brothers and their dependents, so that if gathered together they could defy all the royal armies of Europe; and their strong organisation, under the hand of the grand-master, made them seem more formidable than did their numbers and their wealth.



A Templar

They possessed throughout Christendom more than ten thousand establishments, and a number of fortresses, among them the temple at Paris where Philip had once found a safe asylum from a riot which stormed and raged in vain around its thick walls. In the treasury of the order there were 150,000 gold florins not counting silver or precious vessels. The world never knew what went on in their houses. Everything was secret, but there were vague rumours of orgies, scandals, and impieties, and no profane eye had ever penetrated the mysteries. Knights had disappeared, because, it was said, they had threatened compromising revelations. The pride of the order irritated the people, who charged it with the most odious crimes; but they were guilty only of great laxity of morals, and their religious ceremonies were perhaps mingled in the East with some impure alloy and strange customs.

The 14th of September, 1307, the seneschals and bailiffs were given notice to hold themselves in arms for the 12th of October, and they received at the same time sealed letters not to be opened until the night of the 12th and 13th of October. The surprised knights had no time to resist or gather together. Torture drew from them such statements as torture always draws. It was Philip's desire to associate the whole nation with this great trial, as he had associated it with his dispute with Boniface VIII. The states-general assembled at Tours; the accusations and statements were put before it and the deputies pronounced the knights deserving of death. Provincial councils likewise condemned them. That of Paris consigned to the flames in one day, in the faubourg St. Antoine, fifty-four Templars, who retracted what they had avowed under torture. Nine were burned at Senlis and there certainly were other executions. The pope pronounced at the Council of Vienne the dissolution of the order throughout all Christendom, and ordered their great

wealth turned over to the Hospitallers (knights of Rhodes). But the royal fist did not readily release what it held. All the money found in the temples, two-thirds of the personal property, credits, and a considerable amount of lands remained in the hands of the king. In Italy, England, Spain, and Germany, the order of the Temple was abolished and its wealth in part confiscated by the princes. But there were no executions except in France. The memory of Philip IV must alone bear the burden of these atrocities.

This same Council of Vienne condemned several errors, born within the Franciscan order—the heresy of the "Spirituels" who regarded St. Francis almost as a new reincarnation of Jesus; that of the "Beguins" or "Beghards," who exempted mankind, perfect according to their ideas, from any judgment by human standards. And finally that of the Fraticelli who [inquisitors tell us] abolished property and declared that everything should be in common, family as well as property. We see these wild doctrines are very old.[b]

Philip's Fiscal Policy

Nothing satiated the royal exchequer, neither the spoils of the Templars, nor the tithes collected under pretext of the "holy war," nor the taxes levied for the knighting of the king's sons and the marriage of his daughter —that fatal marriage, from which sprang Edward III. Even the *maltôtes* did not suffice.

The maltôte, an illegal exaction, which, to a certain extent placed all subjects in the position of serfs taxable at their owner's will and pleasure, was at least openly arbitrary and illegal; but the "mutable currencies" were treacherously sprung upon the citizens in the midst of their transactions and money exchanges, and brought dismay upon society at every turn, doing his subjects a wrong out of all proportion to the benefit gained by their ruler. In all of this there was as much ignorance as perversity, and one has difficulty in conceiving the ineptitude shown in the government financial business by legal men, ordinarily so clever. Philip the Fair's statutes regarding the currency are a genuine chaos: sometimes the king takes the paternal tone, and pretends to so contrive the rate of exchange that his subjects shall suffer as little as possible; sometimes he throws off the mask, and prohibits the testing and weighing of the royal moneys issued, on pain of forfeiting the coins submitted to the test and of "being both body and goods at the king's disposal." No one could obtain either silver or copper but at the royal mints. The importation of the Florentine golden florin and other foreign coins was forbidden under the same penalty (for fear of comparison). Next Philip withdrew from circulation half of his own current coins, under the pretext of their having been counterfeited and tampered with by others—coiners, Lombards, etc. The Jews and the Lombards were always convenient scapegoats for the royal iniquities. They were again expelled in 1311–1312, with the usual confiscations. In 1310 there was a grand re-coining of all the moneys; everyone was forced to give in all he possessed to the directors of the royal mints, who gave out in exchange new money, much inferior in weight and purchasing power to the value attributed to it. The king was anxious to gain popularity at the expense of the money-lenders, and issued orders that all liabilities should be discharged in the new money, in spite of every previous stipulation to the contrary. To the same end, after having fixed a maximum (15 to 20 per cent. per annum!) for the exorbitant interest charged on silver, he ended by prohibiting all usury, which is to say all interest. If the rates of usury were

scandalous, one must lay the blame of them on the king's persecution of capitalists, Jews, and Italian bankers: naturally the rate of interest increased in proportion to the chances of loss incurred by the lender. By these means Philip raised fresh barriers to trade and swelled the public discontent.

A statute enacted in June, 1313, surpassed in audacity all others that had preceded it. The king was no longer satisfied with managing his own money as he would; he wished to handle that of the barons also, and asserted himself to be the only coiner of the realm. By friendly transactions, by usurpations, by every possible means, he had already reduced by more than half their number the nobles who minted money. In the preamble to his statute he now announced his intention of restoring all French moneys "to their ancient currency and status" (of the time of St. Louis, apparently), and forbade all prelates and barons to mint fresh money until further orders. He was acting, he said, under the advice of "the whole caboodle of decent people in every decent town in his kingdom," and he looked to the *bourgeoisie* to uphold him against the resentment of the nobles. As a matter of fact, at another time the bourgeoisie would have been only too pleased to see the nobles deprived of the right of coining money, a right which they grossly abused; but under Philip the Fair, would they gain much by it? This very statute of June, 1313, introduced mutations more disastrous than any heretofore. It hit all classes of society, and all were equally irritated, with the exception of the lawyers and certain large tradesmen who constituted themselves overseers, farmers, or coiners on the king's account.

Execution of Jacques de Molay (1314 A.D.)

Philip defied public discontent by redoubling his brutalities. The smallest murmur was reported to the king's spies, and punished by his tyrants. One saw everywhere people flogged and pilloried; every lay and ecclesiastical court robed itself in pitiless severity. In the Place de Grève they burned, in 1313, a nun of Hainault, Marguerite de la Porette, the Mystic. Shortly after a more celebrated execution startled Paris and the whole of France. For more than six years the foremost members of the order of the Temple, the grand-master, the "visitor" of France, and the masters of Aquitaine and Normandy, had languished in the king's dungeons; they could not be left to die unjudged in darksome cells. At last the pope, who had reserved the decision of their fate to himself, appointed a commission consisting of the cardinal D'Albano and two other cardinals. The archbishop of Sens and various doctors of divinity and of canonical law joined them. Brought before their judges, the four captives reiterated, it is said, the confessions made by themselves and their comrades. It was wished to mark their arrest with great solemnity and to "read a lesson" to the public, as the saying is. The court therefore held its sitting in the open space before Notre Dame de Paris, upon a scaffold draped in scarlet. The four accused were led to the foot of the scaffold, where they repeated their confession before all the people. Their sentence was then pronounced — they were to be immured for life. "But just when," says the continuator of Nangis,[9] "the cardinals believed they had ended the affair, the grand-master, Jacques de Molay, and the master from Normandy, Guy, brother of the dauphin of Auvergne, suddenly retracted their confession, denying it in toto, and stubbornly defended themselves against the cardinal who had 'pointed the moral' and the archbishop of Sens, to the immense surprise of everybody."

The commission, struck dumb with astonishment and a sort of fear by this unlooked-for incident, did not know how to decide. They adjourned till the morrow to deliberate at their leisure, and handed over the grand-master and his companions to the guardianship of the royal warder of Paris till the next day. The news of what had taken place outside Notre Dame was promptly carried to the king, who was at that time at the Palais de la Cité. Philip, seized with a dread only equalled by his anger, sent in haste for his most trusty advisers, "without summoning the scholars" (*i.e.*, the commission). The determination he had arrived at was the boldest and most atrocious that can be imagined. At night-fall he had the two Templars conveyed to a small island in the Seine, "between the garden of the Palais de la Cité and the church of the Frères-Hermites," and there had them burned together. "They helped," says the continuator of Nangis,[9] "to prepare the fagots with so stout and resolute a heart, persisting to the end in their denials with so great steadfastness, that they left those who witnessed their torment filled with admiration and stupefaction." (March 11th, 1314.)

The ecclesiastical powers swallowed this outrage as many another, demanding from the king no account for the double murder of two offenders who did not come within his jurisdiction, and whose backsliding he had dealt with on his own authority alone. Indeed Clement V was already failing, and did not long survive the unfortunates whom he had sold to their persecutor. He died on April 20th. An Italian historian, Ferretus or Fereti of Vicenza, asserts that Jacques de Molay, from the midst of his fagots, cited the king and the pope to appear before the tribunal of God, Clement within forty days and Philip within a year.

Philip was in truth nearing the end of his sinister career. The last year of his reign will be seen to be the most bloody. France was horrified by more hideous scenes than any she had hitherto witnessed, more hideous even than the murder of the Templars, and this time the tragedy was enacted at the foot of the throne among the royal family. Philip's three sons, Louis Hutin, king of Navarre, and count of Champagne and of Brie, Philip, count of Poitiers, and Charles, count of La Marche, had married — the first Marguerite, sister of Hugh V, duke of Burgundy; and the other two Joan and Blanche, daughters of Otto or Othelin, count of Burgundy or of Franche-Comté. In the spring of 1314 the young wives of the king's three sons were suddenly arrested on a charge of scandalous conduct. Marguerite, queen of Navarre, and Blanche, countess of La Marche, were accused of frequent acts of adultery, "even on the most holy days," with Philip and Walter d'Aulnai, young Norman knights in their service. The Aulnai brothers were not allowed to challenge to a duel in defence of their innocence and that of their mistresses; confession of guilt was wrung from them by torture, and the princesses, "stripped," says the continuator of Nangis,[9] "of all temporal honours, after receiving the tonsure, were imprisoned, Marguerite in Château Gaillard d'Andely, and Blanche in the abbey of Maubuisson, where, after strict seclusion, and deprived of all human consolation, they ended their days in despair."

The fate of their lovers was even more terrible. They were conducted to the place du Martroi St. Jean, in Paris, and there flayed alive and mutilated; they were not beheaded until every means had been exhausted that an infernal science could devise to prolong the victim's sufferings without actually killing him.

Joan of Burgundy, countess of Poitiers, more fortunate than her sisters Blanche and Marguerite of Navarre, was declared chaste and not guilty by

a parliament in which sat the king's brothers and the great nobles: she was "reconciled to her husband." Joan of Burgundy was heiress to Franche-Comté: it was not possible to condemn her as an adulteress and annul her marriage without renouncing the wealth she had brought to the royal house; perhaps her riches had something to say as to her innocence.[c]

The general oppression nearly caused an insurrection when Philip ordered a new tax on the sale of all merchandise. There was, from the first, a union between the nobles and the bourgeoisie similar to the league which in England laid the foundations of the people's liberty and imposed the Magna Charta on John Lackland. Philip, this time, withdrew, and cancelling the obnoxious tax he summoned representatives of forty of the largest towns to a conference at Paris at which he promised to coin henceforth nothing but honest money.

But this ill-starred man, this king, the harshest France had had up to this time, although but forty-six years of age, had already reached the end of his days. He expired November 29th, 1314.[b] The exact cause of Philip's early demise has never been perfectly understood. The commonly accepted account is that it resulted from an accident that occurred during a stag hunt. "He saw the stag coming and drew his sword, and clapped spurs to his horse and thought to strike the stag; but his horse carried him so violently against a tree that the good king fell to the ground, and was very severely hurt in the heart, and was carried to Corbeil. There his malady grew very sore."[f] But this narrative bears the date 1572. "The contemporary French historian" [the continuator of William de Nangis[g]] says Michelet[e] "does not speak of this accident. He says that Philip sank without fever or visible malady, to the great astonishment of the physicians." Nevertheless there was a contemporary rumour of an accident during a hunt of the wild boar, for Dante[h] writing exactly at the time of Philip's death speaks contemptuously of him as "The false coiner who died of a blow from a pig's skin" (*i.e.*, a boar).[a]

Political Progress in Philip's Reign

Whether or not Philip the Fair was a wicked man or a bad king, there is no denying that his reign is the grand era from which we date civil order in France and the foundation of the modern monarchy.[e] Under this reign the royal domain made important acquisitions, some of which, unfortunately, were not lasting; the counties of La Marche, Angoumois, Champagne, Franche-Comté, Lectoure, a portion of Flanders (Lille, Douai, and Orchies), Quercy, the great city of Lyons and a part of Montpellier. The count of Bar had been compelled to do homage to the French crown for all his land situated west of the Maas.

Vassals were bound to serve their sovereign, in his court, by their advice and justice. The king's feudal court had a double character, for in it the king called upon his barons for advice and sentences. With the further evolution of royalty the functions of the king's court developed, and a division became necessary; there was the political court or grand council, and the judiciary court or parliament. Under St. Louis the functions of the parliament were not yet clearly defined. Philip the Fair perfected its organisation. He caused this court to be held at Paris twice a year for two months in the Palais de la Cité, which later bore the name of the Palais de Justice (1303). This sovereign court of justice which claimed to exercise its jurisdiction over the entire kingdom was destined to be the great instrument employed by future kings to bring the whole of France under their

absolute authority. Philip also established two *échiquiers*[1] at Rouen and two *grands jours* at Troyes and placed these provincial courts under the control of the parliament. The office of public prosecutor (*ministère public*) charged with defending in all causes the rights of the king and society, seems to date from the time of Philip the Fair.

As the king had formed the parliament from the grand council, so he formed the chamber of accounts (*chambre des comptes*) from the parliament of which it first was a part but later became a separate institution. Thus there were three great divisions in the high administrative department of the country — the judiciary parliament; the financial, chamber of accounts; and the political, the grand council.

The many ordinances of Philip which have been preserved prove his activity in organising the new administration, which was the debt of royalty to the country, since it had substituted its own powers for those of the feudal lords. If these laws often bear the stamp of a despotic and taxing spirit, they sometimes show a knowledge of the true principles of government. One of them prohibited private war and judicial duels during wars of the crown. This was done to disarm feudalism.

A most important event of Philip's administration was the convocation in 1302 of the first states-general. Brought by his violences face to face with a great peril, and ruined by his constant disastrous undertakings, the most despotic of the French kings was compelled [as we have seen] to call around him the deputies of the nation, in order to obtain the assistance of which he stood in need and to fortify himself in his quarrel with the pope, with the assent of France. But in discussing before them the prerogatives of his crown and of the tiara, he recognised by implication the ancient right of national sovereignty so deeply obscured for centuries. Philip doubtless asked nothing but what he was sure of obtaining, but the men who, in 1302, fought for the king against the pope and in 1326 disposed of the crown, would later on be emboldened to the attempt to lay hands on the crown itself.[b]

The states-general consisted of a strictly national assembly which the barons, bishops, abbeys, provosts, and deans of chapters were invited to attend in person, and to which each city of the realm was invited to send two or three deputies or representatives. This was not the first time that the crown had consulted the nobles and the prelates; but it does not appear that until now the deputies of the third estate had taken part in such a council. If they had been previously consulted on rare occasions, it was in regard to special matters such as the regulation of the currency, and even then certain determinate cities were represented.

The states-general thus called together by Philip the Fair, and which assembled the 12th of April, 1302, in the church of Notre Dame at Paris, was convoked, to be sure, with a specific aim and under extraordinary circumstances. Its unique object was to show the pope that the country upheld the king (see p. 80). But none the less does this meeting stamp the year 1302 as an important date in French history.[2] Through this representative

[1] The *échiquier* of Rouen was the ancient feudal court of the dukes of Normandy; it was held alternately at Rouen, Falaise, and Caen. Philip the Fair put royal magistrates at its head and fixed it at Rouen, where it met twice a year at Easter and Michaelmas, whence the expression *les deux échiquiers*. The *grands jours* were presided over by a judicial commission appointed by the king, but like the *échiquier* of Rouen it was a local institution that had already long existed.

[2] Perhaps Guizot's *p* slightly dissenting view is worth quoting. He says: "It has often been asserted that Philip the Fair was the first who called the third estate to the states-general of the kingdom. The phrase is too grand, and the fact was not new. Under St. Louis deputies of

assembly France, as such, takes part for the first time in its own government; an intervention already necessary, and which is destined soon to become consistent and regular.[k]

LOUIS (X) THE QUARRELSOME (1314–1316 A.D.)

Philip the Fair had mingled little with the chivalry of his time. He forbade tournaments, and, after the fashion of oriental despots, kept his sons secluded. The eldest, known as Louis X, called Hutin or the Quarrelsome, was fond of rude pastimes. In 1305 he had been crowned king of Navarre at Pamplona, and succeeded at the same time to the county of Champagne. His uncle Charles, count of Valois, had much influence over him, a prince who had shown eagerness, but not perseverance, to tread in the adventurous and ambitious path of Charles of Anjou.



LOUIS X
(From an old French print)

Charles entertained an aversion for all his brother's councillors. He accused his chancellor Latilly, bishop of Châlons, with having caused the death of the king by means of sorcery. Latilly's obvious interest had been to keep Philip alive; but Charles caused him, nevertheless, to be imprisoned and tortured under the accusation. Raoul de Presle, another of Philip's legists, was implicated in the same crime, and underwent similar persecution.

But Enguerrand de Marigny, Philip's prime minister, was the chief object of hatred to the king's uncle. Charles blamed Marigny for the depreciation of the coin; but for this crime, even if considered guilty, Louis Hutin thought him not worthy of punishment more severe than banishment to the isle of Cyprus. Charles seemed unable to bring against Marigny himself the accusation of sorcery; he however accused his wife of employing others to make the terrible images of wax. All of those thus implicated were brought, not before parliament, but in the presence of the king, of Charles, and of some barons at Vincennes. The councillors of Philip had set the example of creating courts of justice in whatever way suited their convenience. It was now the turn of the barons, and they condemned Marigny to be hanged on a gibbet; the king, on hearing of sorcery, abandoning his previous efforts to save him (1315).

Another murder was that of Marguerite, wife of Louis, who had been sent to seclusion in the château Gaillard.

The young king was beset with difficulties which required a wise head and

towns were called around the king to deliberate upon certain legislative acts. There are other examples of this. Philip the Fair, then, had not the honour of the first call; and, with regard to assemblies of this kind which occur under his reign, far too great an idea of them is formed. These meetings were very brief, almost accidental, without influence upon the general government of the kingdom, and deputies of towns held but a very inferior place in them. Nevertheless under Philip the Fair they became more frequent than before."]

an established authority to deal with them. A war threatened him already. Count Robert of Flanders hesitated and refused to render the homage due to the king of France on his accession. Philip would have avenged such frowardness by sequestrating the county of Nevers, held by the eldest son of the count of Flanders. But the prince appeared at the French court, and was well received. The war could only be carried on by feudal levies; when these were summoned, the noblesse of the different provinces sent in their grievances in lieu of their contingents. His legists would have counselled Philip the Fair to resist such demands; but his son had surrounded his person, not with legists, but with barons, and these remained acquiescent with the demands of their brother nobles. Of course what was granted to one could not be refused to another. But under the date of this one year, 1315, the French statute book is filled with ordinances regranting their old privileges to the noblesse, and rescinding a large portion of the voluminous legislation [such as abandoning the ancient courts of justice, abolishing the judiciary duel, the right of private war, and procedure by written deposition which had made lawyers necessary] of the French monarchs during the preceding century.[i] The general demand was that the king should hold no relations with the barons' men. But at the same time Louis, in order to get money, made a solemn statement that "according to the law of nature every man should be born free"; from which he concluded that all Frenchmen being by nature free, the serfs of the royal domain could ransom themselves.

Serfdom began to decline from this moment, in contrast with the state of affairs in preceding centuries; freedom now became the prevailing condition amongst rural populations, as it had long been among the inhabitants of the towns—while serfdom was the exception.[b]

Whilst the monarch made these large concessions to his noblesse, he seems to have derived from them no efficient aid in the prosecution of the war with Flanders. To raise money for this purpose, he was obliged to compound with the Lombard merchants of Paris; they consented to pay so much a pound on their importations. The Jews, too, were again permitted to reside in certain cities on the payment of a tax. Louis Hutin was the first king who formally borrowed money on the credit of the state, his successors being obliged to devote to the purpose of repayment all the sums that might accrue from forfeiture and confiscation.

With an army raised at these pains and costs, Louis marched into Flanders. The Flemings were in the neighbourhood of Lille, and the French king encamped opposite to them, with a river running between the armies. The monarch had not an opportunity of putting his own valour and that of his soldiers to the proof. For the elements put a stop to hostilities, the rain pouring down in unusual torrents, flooding the camps, and destroying provisions and crops. This unsuccessful campaign flung the country into anarchy, the barons levying war wherever they could foresee profit from it; and those who had right of coinage, Charles of Valois included, making exorbitant use of it to enrich themselves at the expense of the country. The king suspended this right, but his order was set at naught; and he then strove to regulate the nature and fineness of the coin which each grandee might issue.

Whilst Charles of Valois was thus employed, the king despatched his brother, Philip, count of Poitiers, to Avignon, to hasten the election of the pope. He was there when tidings reached him that Louis Hutin had expired at Vincennes on the 5th of July, 1316. After heating himself at ball-playing, the king had descended to the cellar to quench his thirst, an imprudence that proved fatal.

[1316–1322 A.D.]

PHILIP (V) THE TALL (1316–1322 A.D.)

Philip immediately hastened to Paris, and took possession of the royal palace. Charles of Valois thought at first of disputing the regency ; but the armed citizens of Paris, whom Louis had enrolled for the Flemish war, with the constable at their head, drove Charles' followers out of the Louvre. Clemence, the young widow of Louis Hutin, now announced her pregnancy. In addition to this posthumous child, Louis had left a daughter, Joan, by Marguerite of Burgundy. The duke of Burgundy, although he had been unable or unwilling to protect Marguerite, maintained the rights of her daughter, and pleaded that Philip the Fair had acknowledged her legitimacy.

Soon afterwards the queen gave birth to a son, who was christened John ; but the child lived only a few days. Philip lost no time in at once claiming the rank of king, and appointing no distant day in January, 1317, for his coronation at Rheims. Charles of Valois, who was at the head of the noblesse, already began to entertain well-founded hopes of the royal succession accruing to his own family. The duke of Burgundy was pacified by obtaining one of Philip's daughters in marriage, with a considerable sum of money in dowry, as well as Franche-Comté. Joan, daughter of Louis Hutin, whose claims the duke thus abandoned, was affianced to the only son of the count of Évreux.

The grounds for this exclusion of females from the throne of France are not to be found in any law, but in the circumstance of Joan's mother having been stricken with infamy, with no staunch friend to defend her, whilst Philip was in possession of the royal authority, of which it would have required a civil war to dispossess him. With respect to the old Salic law afterwards invoked, it related but to fiefs and military service, and yet in fiefs it had been so generally set aside, that women succeeded to lands and to noble property in all the provinces of France. It must have been evident to the noblesse, as to others, that the descent of a fief, much more of the crown, to females weakened it for a time, and eventually rendered it liable to become the prey of personages, perhaps foreigners, who had not the interest of the kingdom at heart. The accession of Philip the Tall, therefore, and the exclusion of the daughters of Louis Hutin, were popular with the citizens, not displeasing to the noblesse, and not against the interest of the princes of the blood. And thus was it decided that the kingdom of France, instead of being considered as a patrimony that descended to direct heirs, even if female, was a high function which it required a prince to fill.

The reign of Philip the Tall was marked by no chivalrous enterprise or military feat. French and Flemings were disposed more to negotiate than fight. The chief object of Philip the Tall's efforts and edicts was to organise a regular administration. He ordered, first, that a certain number of the members of the great council should be always with the king, a provision afterwards repeated in the order that the small or privy council (*l'estroit conseil*) should meet every month. [In this council cruel persecutions of the Jews and lepers were organised.] He established the chamber of accounts, and regulated the issues of the treasury, no payment to be made without the king's own signature. The abuses of Philip's predecessors are chiefly known by his efforts to amend them. Philip regulated parliaments, their number and their sitting. No prelate was to sit in that of Paris unless he belonged also to the king's council. Parliament should always be attended by a baron or two. It was empowered to send commissioners into the provinces to judge

causes instead of bringing the parties to Paris and thereby creating expenses. The king forbade (1316) nobles to sell fiefs or feudal property to non-nobles.[a]

Like his grandfather Philip III, Philip the Tall gave titles of nobility to people of common origin, an innovation which, by renewing the aristocratic body, assured its longevity, but at the same time altered its character. In the beginning, nobility was a personal matter; feudalism had made it an attribute of the military fief; here were the kings separating it. It is a serious change; for one day these letters of nobility will be bought, and there will be no real nobility when all the world may be noble with the power of money.

Thus threatened from above by the kings, feudalism was also threatened from below by the people. The development of the towns continued: that of the country began; the bourgeois obtained from Philip V permission to have their own military organisations; each town had a captain for its citizen companies, each bailiwick a captain-general; and it was in this century, if not in this reign, that the ecclesiastical parishes became civil communities. The country people, formerly completely isolated, were being brought more and more together, at first around the church and the castle under the surveillance of the seigniorial intendant, later under a syndic or mayor always appointed by the lord and who brought the people together to discuss their common interests.

This was the beginning of municipal organisation in country places.[b]

One of the latest schemes of Philip, much too advanced for his time, was to establish but one measure and one money throughout the kingdom. He calculated that this could not be done without great expense, and he proposed taking the fifth part of the goods of all his subjects for the purpose. But the townsfolk objected to the tax, whilst the nobles who had the right of coinage persisted in retaining so profitable a privilege. Philip was seized in the same year with dysentery and intermittent fever, which terminated in languor and confined him for months to his couch. The people did not fail to attribute his disease to the unheard-of exactions and extortions that he meditated. Philip the Tall did not live to accomplish them; he expired in January, 1322.

CHARLES (IV) THE FAIR (1322–1328 A.D.)

No one put forward any claim on the part of the daughters of Philip the Tall to the regal succession. Charles, the youngest son of Philip the Fair, was at once hailed as king; and so incontestably, that he seems to have dispensed with the ceremony of coronation. The first object with Charles, called, like his father, the Handsome or the Fair, was to leave an heir to the throne. Less cruel than Louis Hutin, he obtained a papal dispensation or divorce from his wife Blanche, not on account of the adultery of which she had been convicted, but on the plea of consanguinity. Charles immediately married Mary of Luxemburg, daughter of the late emperor Henry VII. This queen produced no heir, dying in premature childbirth within two years, when Charles married his cousin Joan, daughter of the count d'Évreux.

The first years of the reign of Charles the Fair were chiefly marked by a trial in which severity was at least warranted by justice, and in which the king and court were above sparing culprits even of the highest connection. Jourdan de Lille, lord of Casaubon, in Gascony, having married the niece of Pope John XXII, considered himself above restraint. Accused of eighteen

crimes each worthy of death, the king had spared him, out of consideration for the pope; but Casaubon resumed his old habits. No traveller or merchant was safe from his rapine, nor damsel nor even man from his violence. Summoned to appear before the court of parliament to answer some of these acts, the Gascon lord beat with his own mace the royal sergeant who bore the summons. He came to Paris, nevertheless, with a noble suite, bravely reckoning on impunity. He was, however, committed to prison, tried, condemned to death, and hanged.[i]

Contemporary writers tell us little of the life of Charles IV, or of his government. We know that he paid visits to various parts of his realm, and that while so doing he confirmed the charters of certain cities of the south of France. We know, too, that in his earlier years Charles aspired to the crown of the Holy Roman Empire, and that for a time circumstances seemed to favour his ambition. He had the support of the pope and of the two most powerful German houses, those of Austria and of Luxemburg. But the Germans as a nation were opposed to the idea of a French emperor, and the negotiations to this end were abandoned on the death of Leopold of Austria in 1326.[k]

It would appear from the ordinances and other acts of Charles the Fair that the party of the noblesse, dominant under Louis Hutin, but repressed under Philip the Tall, recovered full authority under Charles. The Valois, who put themselves forward as the representatives of the chivalry of the age and as the enemy of the legists, appear dominant. They led an expedition against Guienne, threatened Flanders, and aided Mortimer and Isabella in the struggle which terminated in the murder of Edward II. The ordinances of Charles the Fair do not interfere with the noblesse, except to shield them from the encroachments of the king's *baillis:* the lords of Auvergne and Brittany obtained especial immunities of this kind. Although armies were raised from Flemish and for Gascon war, the nobles were apparently not called upon to contribute to them except by feudal service; whilst the Parisians were called upon to keep up a body of two hundred men-at-arms, and to levy a tax on sales to meet this expenditure. Towns which had not the privileges of *communes*, and were without mayors or sheriffs, were ordered not to pay *taille*, but, instead of it, the tax on sales, of one denier in the livre, which tax was not to be levied on the produce sent to market by either nobles or clergy. Money continued to be the great trouble and principal anxiety of government, the middle and civic classes being singled out as the only ones which could regularly furnish it, except when some rich and privileged body offered itself to the greed of the spoiler.

The same fate which had carried off his brother at so young an age awaited Charles. Taken ill at Christmas, he expired at the end of January, 1328. "Thus was the entire progeny of Philip the Fair, and finer was not to be found in the kingdom of France, completely exterminated in the space of fourteen years."[i]

ASPECTS OF CIVILISATION

The Middle Ages themselves at this moment, at least in France, were near their end, for the things they were attached to—the Crusades, chivalry, feudalism—were gone, or fast passing away; the papacy, scoffed at in the days of Boniface VIII, was captive at Avignon; the successor of Hugh Capet was a despot, and the sons of villeins were sitting in the states-general of the realm, opposite the nobles and the clergy.[b]

Two or three centuries before, France had seen a great movement accomplished in her midst, called the communal revolution. The greater part of

the cities had acquired — be it pacifically, be it at the cost of struggles against the land-owners, or by dissensions and intestine wars — municipal rights combined with independent jurisdiction. Some of them had acquired a veritable sovereignty. At present, under King John, this sovereignty existed no longer. The cities had gradually returned to the royal administration, although each retained its charter; it may be said, in a general way, that they had again become dependent, since St. Louis in regard to finance, since Philip the Fair in regard to tribunals, and for the levying of militia since Philip the Tall. But, in spite of this change which took from them the character of independent republics, to make them members of a great state, they had retained considerable liberty and power of action. Their citizens formed a third order, having like the clergy or the nobility their own peculiar privileges and correlative obligations. They possessed a great and fruitful initiative for their commercial interests and their industries. They aspired to exercise a rightful influence over the government, and the states-general offered them an obvious means.

The bourgeoisie was not hostile to seigneurial aristocracy as several historians have represented, but it had different interests and different aims, since it owed its wealth and power to industry and commerce. As for industry, it is well known that the corporations of crafts assured a monopoly more or less extensive to their members, of more or less regular revenues, and the perpetuity of hereditary influence. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recall how the development of these corporations was hampered by their own laws, and if there were already some of great wealth, like those of the butchers of Paris, they were the exception. Industries were restricted in their nature in proportion as they were reduced to the usual crafts, and this was generally the case. They employed only the raw materials produced in the country, like flax, wool, or hides. They worked in iron and other metals, but having no knowledge of large machinery they had little use for coal, the principal agent of metallic production. In general, also, they produced only enough for home consumption. Exportations were confined principally to the textiles manufactured in the south which had a market in the Levant, to the woollen stuffs, serges, and tapestries of Arras, to the linens of Rheims and Picardy. Thanks to this circumstance the towns of the latter province began to rival the large industrial cities of the Netherlands.

The progress of industry was genuine, but would only follow that of commerce. Now it was principally the progress of commerce which amazed the fourteenth century. The use of the compass, of which no traces can be found before St. Louis, in permitting longer voyages, established connections, used more than formerly, between the coasts of the Mediterranean and those of the ocean and the English Channel. The commerce of the two seas, by the straits of Gibraltar, rare enough before the year 1300, took, at the beginning of that epoch, a rapid stride forward. On the other hand the triumph of Christianity and civilisation in the northern districts along the tributaries of the Baltic, accompanied by the establishment of German settlements along the coasts of that sea in Prussia and Livonia, opened to the merchants northern Europe, long infested by pirates and long difficult of access. Now began a regular exchange of the products of the north and those of the south. Amiens, whose ordinary commerce had long been restricted to Flanders, England, Scotland, and Ireland, now extended the circumference of her commerce to the Hanseatic countries and their towns, to the Scandinavian kingdoms and those of the Spanish peninsula. All these towns prospered, and following more or less the movement of the Flemish cities became storehouses for the

products of northern or southern Europe and even of the merchandise of the Orient.

Bruges and Antwerp were at that period markets of great importance. The whole world seemed to gather there ; the influx of strangers was unceasing. The Hanseatics, the Venetians, the Genoese elbowed the English and the merchants of all the states of the continent. This favoured that commercial movement begun in the thirteenth century, and largely increased during the first years of the fourteenth, when the cloth industry of Flanders took such a rapid stride and became powerful enough to lay down the law to the governments, a thing which has hardly been seen before. In effect it gained thereby numerous markets for the sale of its products, and abundant capital to increase its operations.

The commercial movement which had its centre in Flanders extended to a certain distance, and made itself felt in the towns of northern France. All these towns had treaties with the Flemish cities. Paris was even affiliated with the Hanseatic League, of which Bruges was the principal warehouse. The safety of navigation and maritime commerce preoccupied the French government in the fourteenth century. In order that the ownership of cargoes might be guaranteed to the ship-owners, Philip the Fair created special tribunals of *commissionaires examinateurs*, charged with judging the questions of flotsam and jetsam on the coasts; these tribunals were the originals of the admiralties. The government also undertook to fight piracy and restrain the usage of letters of marque. It was customary for the proprietors of a vessel robbed by pirates, if they could not obtain satisfaction from the town to which the pirates belonged, to indemnify themselves by selling for their own profit the property of foreigners of the same nation established in the realm. International conventions alone could destroy this barbarous custom. The maritime wars against England were far from being favourable to its suppression ; but they helped to restrain and submit its exercise to regulations. Treaties to that effect were signed with several foreign rulers. One council, assembled in Paris in 1314, proscribed letters of marque, as contrary to religion and morals.

Certain ports were opened to foreigners. Harfleur to the merchants of Aragon, of Majorca, Castile, and Portugal who had also free entrance into the Seine ; Le Crotoy and Abbeville were opened to those of Castile who had the entrée to the Somme. Philip of Valois made the agreement to maintain these ports, to suppress the taxes which hindered commerce, and to accord various privileges to foreigners, among others that of having consuls and judges of their own nationality. At Harfleur the Spaniards were included among the inhabitants, and participated in the rights of the bourgeoisie. At Rouen they occupied a particular quarter. The Italians received, in 1315, definite privileges from Louis X, in four cities — Paris, St. Omer, La Rochelle, and Nîmes. The Venetian fleet, which came annually to the port of Bruges, stopped generally at Dieppe.

The Great Fairs

The fourteenth century is the epoch of the prosperity of the great fairs. The fairs were then to the towns of considerable importance and for certain parts of France what they still are to the villages. At these fairs were bought and sold all such articles as were not common ; these purchases and sales could be made only there and at certain times of the year. Since individual commerce offered a great deal of difficulty, and lacked the most indispensable

elements of security, it became necessary for the merchants to agree upon the transportation of their merchandise, and to unite in order to insure the fairness, often even the simple possibility, of transactions.

The most important fairs in the fourteenth century were those of St. Denis, and the Lendit, of which the origin was in Merovingian times; those of Champagne, held at Troyes, Provins, Lagny, Rheims, and Bar-sur-Aube, protected by the regulations of Philip the Fair and Philip of Valois, those of Beaucaire in the south. They served as marts for the principal foreign productions, the linens of Holland, which were still an object of luxury; the woollens of England; the silks of Italy; the hides and leathers of Spain; the cloths of Flanders, whose superiority was recognised everywhere; the Italian stuffs, ornamented with embroidery and woven with gold; the wines of Spain, Portugal, and Greece. At Troyes were to be met the merchants of Germany and the countries of the north. To Beaucaire came those of the southern countries, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Greeks, Berbers, Egyptians; the Genoese came to Beaucaire to buy the cloths woven at Narbonne, Perpignan, and Toulouse, and destined for exportation. Ordinarily the merchants of the same nation, sometimes those of the same town, formed a syndicate. At the fair of the Lendit every town had for its negotiations its particular place, as is the custom to-day in our great expositions.

All the kings, from Philip the Bold, strove to attract foreign merchants by giving them new privileges, that is to say, in multiplying the guarantees which they needed. They were exempted from certain tolls. International treaties were made to assure the free land passage of merchandise transported from one realm to another. We have a remarkable example of this sort of treaty. It was a stipulation, signed in 1327 by the kings of France, England, Spain, Aragon, Sicily, and Majorca.

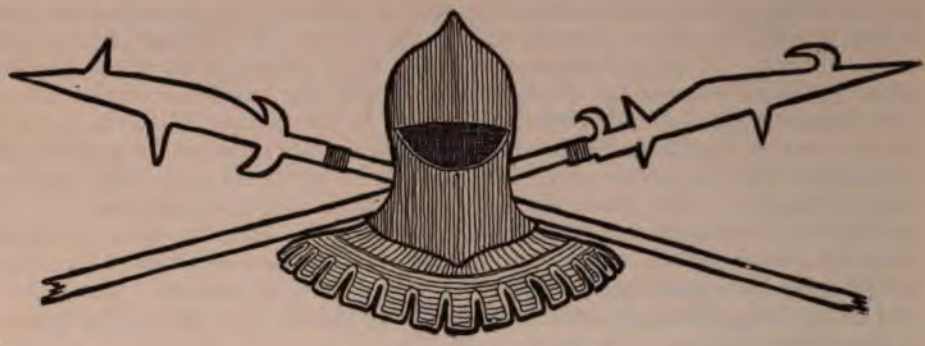
The fairs of Champagne were the objects of regulations which it was aimed to make as definite and at the same time as favourable as possible. The tariff was fixed for the taxes which were collected there. Royal commissioners were chosen for the police, for brokers, and notaries, in order to assume the sincerity of transactions and of guards to certify to the quality of the merchandise sold. To the merchants of each nation was conceded the right to elect their national judges, and to submit to these judges the regulation of their disputes, except in case of appeal, which could be carried to the tribunal of fairs as a first resort, and as a second resort to the chamber of accounts. Guarantees were also accorded to foreign merchants against deterioration of money and arbitrary confiscations. In order to define the point where usury began, which the laws continued to fight, interest on commercial matter was fixed at fifteen per cent., and the stipulations of private persons were tolerated up to this figure. The importance of the fairs, and the pains taken by the government to make them popular, could not but be favourable to public wealth. A rich and enlightened bourgeoisie was founded in the large cities, at Rouen, Amiens, Rheims, Troyes, Orleans. All these towns and others enlarged their areas, raised façades of cut stone in their principal streets, constructed arcades, galleries, porticoes, and municipal buildings; but Paris already dominated them all. Her population rose to two or three hundred thousand souls. She already possessed some sort of a monopoly for the fabrication of articles of luxury.

Paris had grown with the monarchy. To the advantage of a very considerable commerce, of extended and special industries, were joined others not less important. It was an ecclesiastical and literary centre. A whole quarter was occupied by the population of the schools. Her universities, at

the same time French and European, could not fail to play an important rôle in the revolutions of the country and in the discussion of the great interests of the church. Finally, Paris was the seat of parliament, that of the highest administration, the centre of government, and the residence of the court. The greater part of the provinces possessed in the quarter of the Louvre or the quarter of St. Paul, hôtels, where they lived surrounded by guards and numerous servitors, which very often occupied vast spaces with their gardens and out-houses. Ever since then the merchants from the interior or from foreign countries, able workmen, clerks, writers, the nobility, have thronged into the great capital. The bourgeoisie of Paris had more learning, more wealth, and also more pretensions than those of other towns. Their chief and natural representative, the provost of merchants, was one of the powers of the state.

The idea of a national representation, with fixed conditions and attributes, is a modern one, and was almost unknown in the Middle Ages. There were no written constitutions in existence, except civic charters, which had a purely local character. The government on its part, without being absolute, admitted of no binding control. In the meantime, public opinion was being consulted, as it became necessary to reckon with it, and the independence which asserted itself everywhere. In the thirteenth century deputies from the cities were convoked and consulted separately; in the fourteenth they were combined with those of the clergy or the nobility of the provincial estates or the states-general. But no fixed rule was followed. It was the king and his officers who determined each time the conditions and the forms of the election.[k]





CHAPTER V

THE OPENING OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

[1328–1350 A.D.]

> Great enterprises and deeds of arms were achieved in these wars; since the time of good Charlemagne, king of France, never were such feats performed. — FROISSART.[6]

ALTHOUGH France was little prepared for a great national war, a king mounted its throne who was almost certain to provoke one. The princes of the family of Valois had always represented the ideas and the interests of the noblesse during the preceding reigns, when reasons of state, maxims of law, and necessities of finance had led the government to look to other councillors and undergo other influence. With the accession of Philip of Valois, the noblesse recovered that ascendency of which they had been so long deprived. And this influence they displayed with a petulance and a pride which could not but provoke what they most loved, a war.

"Charles the Fair having expired, the barons assembled to take into consideration the government of the kingdom. The queen was pregnant, and until the sex of her issue was known, the title of king could not be assumed. The only question was to whom, as nearest in blood, the government of the kingdom should be committed, especially as in France a female could not succeed to the crown. The English said that their king, the son of Philip the Fair's daughter, and consequently nephew of the late monarch, was, as nearest of kin, more entitled to the regency and to the throne, if the queen did not bring forth a prince, than Philip of Valois, who was but the cousin of the deceased monarch. Many learned in the civil and canon law were of this opinion. Isabella, the daughter of Philip the Fair, might, they alleged, be set aside on account of her sex; but one of the right sex, and of the nearest affinity, ought to succeed. The men of France, incapable of suffering the idea of becoming subjects of an English prince, replied, that Edward could only succeed by the right of his mother; and when the mother had no right, the son could have none. This opinion being accepted as the most sensible, was approved by the barons, and the government delivered to

[1328 A.D.]

Philip of Valois. He accordingly received the homage due to the crown of France, but not that due to the crown of Navarre, which the count of Évreux claimed by right of his wife, daughter of Louis Hutin."

This narrative, by the continuator of Nangis,[c] is sufficiently correct. Navarre was given to the count of Évreux, he consenting to receive pecuniary compensation for the counties of Champagne and Brie. In April the queen was confined of a daughter; Philip instantly assumed the title of king, and gave orders for his coronation at Rheims. At the same time, by a letter dated Northampton, the 16th day of May, 1328, Edward appointed two bishops as procurators to make good his claim to the kingdom of France. At the close of the same month Philip was solemnly crowned at Rheims.

The first act of the new king as regent seems to have been to order the treasurer of the late monarch, Peter Remi, to be tortured — thus compelled to confess treason, and finally hanged. He also summoned his barons to support him in a military expedition into Flanders. Count Louis was obstructed in his government, and especially in his levy of taxes, by the people of Bruges, Ypres, and other cities; those of Ghent alone remaining true to him and to France. Louis demanded aid of Philip. The greater part of the barons were of opinion that the season was too far advanced to admit of an expedition that year; but Philip, anxious to signalise his reign, turned to the constable, Walter de Châtillon, and asked his advice. "The brave heart finds all times opportune for fighting," replied the constable. The king accordingly summoned his lieges to meet him at the feast of the Madeleine in July, at Arras. "But the good towns," says the chronicle of St. Denis,[h] "did not attend, giving their money instead, and staying at home to mind their cities."



PHILIP VI
(From an old French print)

The king's army was most numerous, divided into ten divisions or battles, the nobles from every quarter hastening to evince their loyalty by attending the first summons of a new and chivalrous king. The citizens of West Flanders alone mustered to oppose the French, and not more than twelve thousand of them, according to Froissart, took post under Colas Zannequin on the hill of Cassel. They were confident, however, and hung out a flag with a cock painted on it, and an inscription saying, that this cock would crow, ere the upstart king, the *roi trouvé*, would find his way into Cassel.

The Flemings remained tranquil for several days, with the French encamped before them. At last at the hour of vespers when the latter were preparing supper, the Flemings marched out in three bodies, fell upon them, and penetrated into their camp. Philip, like his namesake at Mons-en-Pévêlle, was obliged to withdraw, and it was his chaplains who helped him to put on his armour. When the king showed himself with the *oriflamme*, the knights rallied round him from all quarters, the foot, who were more numerous, continuing their flight. The Flemings had failed in mastering

as well as surprising Philip's camp, and now assailed by the French cavalry (having none of their own), they stood firm and fought for a long time a defensive battle. At last a charge made a breach in their solid phalanx, the French knights poured in, and the Flemings were routed and slaughtered. One of the divisions regained the hill of Cassel, but all alike perished. The king estimated the loss of his enemies at twenty thousand.

He entered the several towns one after the other in triumph, took a thousand citizens of Bruges as hostages, tore down the bells, levelled the walls, and proscribed municipal liberties. When Philip delivered the county of Flanders, thus humbled and mutilated, to its lord, he addressed him, as the continuator of Nangis[c] records, in the following words: "Count, I come hither at your request, and in all probability because you were too negligent in executing justice. I could not have come, as you know, without great expense; yet, out of my liberality, I restore you your land quiet and pacified, and I forgive you the expense. But another time take care. Let me not be obliged to return by your over-clemency, for if I do, it shall be for my own profit."

Thus exhorted, adds the chronicler, Count Louis so exerted himself that, within three months, he had put ten thousand persons to various kinds of death. In this manner was signalised the triumph of the French noblesse over the citizens of West Flanders.

Meantime, in England, affairs were somewhat unsettled. Edward III cannot be considered to have undertaken the government of that country until the death of Mortimer and the imprisonment of the queen-mother in October, 1330. In the first year after Philip's accession, Isabella seemed inclined to dispute his title, and steps were taken to conclude alliances against France. But the success of Philip in the Flemish war, and the hostile attitude of the English barons, as well as the discontent of the English people with the concessions made to Scotland, precluded the idea of prosecuting the quarrel with France.

Edward, therefore, at his mother's bidding, proceeded to Amiens in the spring of 1329, and did homage to Philip, maintaining his rights to those portions of his possessions in the south of France which the French king still retained. But this act of submission led to disputes, one monarch pretending that it was homage *simple*, the other that it was homage *liège*. Philip thought the opportunity favourable for invading Guienne, the power of Isabella and Mortimer being paralysed by their many enemies. The king levied an *aide* upon his barons for the expedition. So far had these hostile intentions proceeded, that the count of Alençon, Philip's brother, attacked the English in Saintonge, and took and burned the castle of Saintes. On the death of Mortimer, however, and the assumption of full power by Edward, Philip returned to more amicable sentiments, and promised to make amends for the affair of Saintes, as well as for several other grievances. The monarchs seemed to be on the most friendly terms; they spoke of proceeding to the Holy Land together, and even of contracting a marriage between their children.

The subsequent coolness and enmity between them is universally, and apparently with justice, attributed to the malice of Robert of Artois, who for some years had been a pretender to the lordship of that county. Robert had undoubtedly been wronged in the judgment which took Artois from him, the direct heir, and gave it to a female and a collateral, merely because she was more closely allied to the reigning king of France. When Robert asserted his rights in arms, Philip the Tall was unable to reduce him; and if Robert submitted, and even constituted himself a prisoner, it was on the

understanding that the unjust sentence against him should be revoked, and the county restored to him. On this understanding, Robert married the daughter of Charles of Valois.

Nevertheless Philip the Tall and Charles the Fair evaded the demands and expectations of Robert, who reckoned on having his rights at last from his brother-in-law, Philip of Valois. Robert accordingly served the crown with zeal, and was one of the principal supporters of this prince's claims to the throne. "Thus, on Philip's accession, Robert became everything in France," says Froissart.[e] There having been two sentences of the court of parliament against Robert's claim, it was difficult to rescind them, at least without some new plea, some yet unproduced documents in his favour. Such, probably, was the remark with which Philip and his law officers met the demands of Robert.

If a document existed likely to prove favourable for his claim, it must have fallen into the hands of those who had robbed him of the county. The countess Mahaut, to whom Philip the Fair had adjudged Artois, died soon after the accession of Philip of Valois. Her chief counsellor and confidant had been the bishop of Arras. He also dying, left voluminous papers, some of which had been secreted and carried off from Arras by a woman named Divion, mistress of the prelate. The countess lived long enough to endeavour, by law or vengeance, to get back the papers from Divion.

Aware of these circumstances, Joan, the countess of Artois, set to work and procured from this woman, or caused to be forged by her, certain documents. One was a letter from the bishop of Arras to Robert of Artois, craving pardon for having purloined the documents. Another was a charter of Robert, count of Artois, the grandfather, settling Artois upon his son, the father of Robert. Michelet[f] declares the documents, which still exist, to be forgeries. Robert of Artois boldly produced them, claimed by virtue of them to be restored to the possession of his county; and, as a proof of what value was men's testimony in those days, he brought upwards of fifty witnesses in support of his false documents. Had the king been prosecutor, these, no doubt, would have been found authentic enough for the parliament. But Robert of Artois was no friend of the legists, and parliament remained firm to its first decision. The king's *procureur* objected to the documents, and Robert, summoned to say whether he would stand by them, hesitated. The woman, Divion, was seized, put to the torture, and acknowledged her forgery. The parliament ordered her to be burned. Robert of Artois being proved so far culpable as to have plotted with her, was accused, moreover, of aiding her to poison the countess Mahaut of Artois. Robert fled to Brabant. The king caused him to be condemned for forgery, and deprived of his estates and honours. His wife, his sons, and relatives were imprisoned, and, the legists accusing him of attempting to murder and to kill the king by sorcery, drove Robert altogether from the continent, and compelled him to take refuge in England. The fugitive was well received by Edward, appointed of his council, and endowed with ample domains.

Philip of Valois knew not what use to make of that absolute power, which the efforts of so many kings had built up. Policy, he evidently had none. He liked the splendour, magnificence, and pride of a court; and, consequently, preferred his noblesse to any other class of society. Still he showed, in the case of Robert of Artois, his determination not to allow any of them to dictate or impose upon him. He consulted his lawyers as in the case of church encroachments, but shrunk from ordinance or legislation in their favour. Abroad, Philip was generally uncertain in purpose.

The monarch's incertitude was, however, soon relieved. Edward III became more and more irritated at the support which the French and Flemings gave to the Scots: in June, 1335, he issued an order from Newcastle to the Cinque Ports to arm, and intercept a naval expedition fitting out at Calais for Scotland. In February, 1336, an edict appeared ordering all Englishmen, from sixteen to sixty, to be prepared to repel invasion. Still negotiations continued; and it was not till August of the same year that Edward announced to his subjects the refusal of the French king to cease rendering active assistance to the Scottish foe. At the same time the count of Flanders threw off the mask by arresting all the English traders in his dominions, and Edward was obliged to respond to it by a similar act.

The following year was spent by both monarchs in preparing alliances, and by Edward in making the most active and unusual preparations for war. Philip hired large bodies of Germans, both men-at-arms and light troops. By marrying the heiress of the duke of Brittany to one of his relatives, he hoped to have secured the allegiance of that prince and family; but Philip's attention was chiefly turned towards the south and the conquest of Guienne, for which enterprise he had the succour of the nobles of the Pyrenees as well as of Languedoc. He seemed not to expect to be seriously attacked on the side of Flanders.

Yet it was in that direction that Edward principally turned his efforts, spending the year 1337 in negotiations with the princes whose territories extended from Antwerp to Cologne. The English king had married the daughter of the count of Hainault, who was the first that he gained, or hoped to have gained; the duke of Brabant, the duke of Gelderland, and the archbishop of Cologne also listened to Edward's proposals, and willingly received his subsidies. They might bring into the field a thousand knights. But Edward pushed his quest for allies still further: he engaged the duke of Austria to invade Burgundy, he concluded an agreement with the count palatine for a subsidiary force, and even obtained a promise from the emperor Ludwig of Bavaria that he would aid in the war against France with an army of two thousand knights; for this his imperial majesty was to be paid 300,000 florins.

These counts and knights observed to the envoy of Edward that, notwithstanding their own prowess, the Flemish artisans would prove far more potent auxiliaries against France than any number of lordly chivalry. Edward approved of the idea; and the bishop of Lincoln and other envoys proceeded to Ghent, "not sparing their money by the way." The subjection of Flanders had been caused by the rich citizens of Ghent proving false to the national cause, supported solely by the men of Bruges and West Flanders. This enabled the democracy of Ghent to triumph over them, and to become organised under the lead of a brewer of that city, named Artevelde. The envoys of Edward addressed themselves to this new king or popular sovereign, and were well received by him. He summoned consuls or deputies from the other towns, and these soon came to an accord that trade should be carried on as usual, and wool imported from England, notwithstanding the prohibitions of France and the count of Flanders.

To Edward wool was at once money and alliance. Whilst the working and manufacturing class of Flemings thus profited by the English, the chiefs and Artevelde himself received money for the occasion. Still, however easy to win over the Flemings to neutrality, it was difficult to induce them to enter upon active war with France. The French, however, and the Flemish aristocracy did all in their power to provoke the civic democracy;

they enticed from Ghent almost the only personage of birth who favoured the popular party, and had entertained the envoys of Edward. This was a knight of Courtrai, father-in-law of Artevelde; when he fell into their hands, they decapitated him, to the great irritation of the men of Ghent. The Flemish knights, in order to intercept the frequent communication and envoys passing between England and the Low Countries, took possession of the isle of Cadsand, close to Walcheren, and lying in wait there for the English, obliged them in going or in returning home, to take the route of Dordrecht, instead of sailing direct from Antwerp. Edward no sooner learned this, than he fitted out an expedition in the Thames under Lord Derby and Sir Walter Manny, of six hundred knights and two thousand archers. These assailed Cadsand, defeated the Flemish knights, and captured Guy of Flanders, who, after some delay, joined the English party.

EDWARD III CLAIMS THE THRONE OF FRANCE

In October, 1337, Edward took the important step of laying claim to the throne of France by right of his mother, sister of Philip the Fair, and of declaring Philip of Valois, descended from a brother of that monarch, a wrongful usurper. This he announced in letters from Edward, king of France and England, to his allies in the Low Countries; and he at the same time appointed the duke of Brabant his vicar-general in the kingdom of France. The king's allies received this solemn announcement, but do not seem to have acted upon it; the duke of Brabant, far from assuming the office of vicar-general, on the contrary assured Philip of Valois of his friendship.

In the spring of 1338, Edward embarked for Antwerp with what forces he could muster, hoping to make a brilliant campaign with the princes of the Low Countries. They showed very little alacrity, and though willing to receive large sums, prepared to prove themselves as little hostile to the French king as was consistent with their receiving the money from the English. The emperor, though he had promised to be ready by St. Andrew's day was too anxious for a reconciliation with the pope to defeat his purpose by aiding in an invasion of France; and Edward was reduced to recommence the task of negotiation.

It was late in 1339 before Edward was joined by his German allies. Some time was passed in solemnly declaring war, and then the English advanced to Cambray, which was garrisoned by French troops. But as it did not belong to the king of France, there was no profit in capturing it; Edward, therefore, pursued his march, against the advice of many of his allies, into France, upon which his relative, the count of Hainault, formally quitted his banner for that of Philip. Edward nevertheless advanced towards St. Quentin, at the head of about forty thousand men. Philip of Valois had mustered an army nearly double in number that of his enemy, there being forty thousand infantry raised by the money of the towns, and twenty thousand more Genoese and Italian foot; three divisions of men-at-arms were each fifteen thousand strong. When the armies were in presence, Edward sent to request the king of France to appoint a day for the battle. Philip eagerly fixed a day, but with all his chivalry, the monarch hesitated. King Robert of Sicily, skilled in the science of astrology, had written to warn the king of France not to engage in combat with the English whilst Edward was with them in person. The French monarch in consequence showed reluctance to engage, and the auxiliaries of both armies took the pretext to

separate. Edward's German allies withdrew, and Philip distributed his men-at-arms amongst the garrisons of the frontier.

It was subsequent to this bootless campaign that Froissart fixes the time of Edward's assuming habitually the title, and quartering the arms, of king of France with his own. This assumption of the crown of France, which seemed not only drawing the sword, but flinging away the scabbard, was a promise to the Flemings that he would wage the "great war" and chiefly through their means and in behalf of their interests. For this purpose he prepared a great expedition, whilst his Queen Philippa spent the winter at Ghent among the good citizens, in order to encourage and attach them to England. But while Edward won the Flemings, his German allies grew lukewarm. He had learned in the last campaign to mistrust their sincerity: they now offered to make peace with France; but Philip rejected their offer, and sent troops to ravage Hainault.

In 1340, Edward had collected a formidable army on board a navy equally numerous. Philip directed his efforts to intercept this expedition, and to muster a fleet capable of performing so important a service. He took into pay great numbers of Genoese officers and seamen; granted the Normans several boons and privileges to induce them to fit out ships, and with these they surprised and burned Southampton, whilst the English visited Eu with equal severity. But on the other hand, the French captured two of their largest vessels, called the *Christopher* and *Edouarda*, in a naval engagement that lasted all day, and cost the lives of a thousand men. In June, Edward sailed from the Thames with his army for the Schelde, not expecting, indeed, to fight a naval combat, for there was a number of the ladies of his court on board.[b]

THE BATTLE OF SLUYS OR L'ÉCLUSE

King Edward embarked on the 22nd of June with the élite of the English knights and archers, and went down the Thames towards Sluys. The French fleet, 140 strong in large ships, "without counting the smaller ones," and carrying more than forty thousand men, awaited them between Blankenberghe and Sluys. This naval army, under the command of Admiral Hugh Quiéret, the treasurer Nicholas Béhuchet, and the Ligurian corsair Barbavara, had for two years wrought much damage to English commerce, taking ships, massacring crews, and making descents on Plymouth, Dover, Southampton, Sandwich, and Rye. England breathed out vengeance, but would not have obtained it if the French fleet had been well commanded. This fleet, thanks to the Genoese auxiliaries, had a great numerical superiority, but the three commanders were at variance.

Béhuchet was a rough bourgeois who had served his naval apprenticeship in the king's exchequer, and whom Philip had been foolish enough to associate with the admirals; this man actually tried to teach an old sea-dog like "Barbevaire." Hugh Quiéret, the titular admiral, was hardly more skilful than Béhuchet. They massed the fleet in a narrow creek off the coast of Flanders, as if the great thing for a navy was to choose a "sure and easily defensible" position.

King Edward and his men, who came along with a fair wind, looked and beheld before Sluys so large a number of vessels that the masts seemed like a wood. The king was very much astonished and asked whose they could be. "Sire," they said, "it is the Norman army kept by the king of France at sea, and which has done you so much damage and burned the good town

[1340 A.D.]

of Hantonne (Southampton), and conquered the *Christopher*, your large ship, and slain those who manned her." "Oh," said the king, "I have wanted to fight them for a long time, and please God and St. George, we will; for of a truth they have caused me so much vexation that I would avenge myself." After so saying, he wisely and skilfully set out his ships, putting the strongest in front, and giving the best places to his soldiers and archers. And he manœuvred and wheeled about so as to get the wind and sun on the poop. The Normans thought he was tacking about so as to flee, but the leader of the Genoese auxiliaries was not so deceived.



CHÂTEAU OF DIEPPE

"When 'Barbevaire' (Barbavara) saw the English ships approaching, he said to the admiral and Nicholas Béhuchet: 'My lords, here is the king of England and all his navy coming upon us; if you take my advice you will steer for the open sea, for, if you stay here, while they have sun, wind, and wave in their favour, they will hem you in so closely that you will be helpless and unable to manœuvre.' To this Nicholas Béhuchet, who understood accounts better than naval warfare, answered, 'Let him be hanged who goes away, for here we will stay, and take our chance.' 'My lord,' replied Barbevaire, 'since you will not believe me, I will not stay to be destroyed and I shall get myself and my ships out of this hole.'" [St. Denis.*h*] And he went off out of the creek with all his Italian galleys and gave all his care to his own fleet.

Edward immediately attacked and began by boarding the great *Christopher*, the ship taken from him a year ago by the Normans. The crew were seized, killed, or thrown into the sea, while the fight became general all along the haven. "The battle was hard and fierce on both sides, archers and crossbow-men shot stubbornly at one another, while soldiers closed and fought hand to hand. That they might fight at better advantage they had large hooks with iron chains which they threw from one ship to another and attached them together."

Right bitterly from six in the morning till three in the afternoon did they fight, Béhuchet himself behaving as a true knight, but all the courage in the world could not repair his error. "The French ships were so entangled in their moorings that they were helpless." Their numbers availed not at all; one after the other they were boarded by the English. Nevertheless the resistance was so fierce that the fate of the day could yet have been changed by the aid of Barbavara, who was manœuvring on the enemy's

flanks, but a considerable reinforcement of Flemings arriving from Bruges and neighbouring districts by the port of Sluys, decided the fate of the French fleet.

"In short, King Edward and his men gained all along the line; the Normans and all the other French were discomfited, dead, or drowned, none escaping, for if they tried to take refuge on land, the Flemings awaited them on the sands."

The English gave almost no quarter. Hugh Quiéret was, they say, slaughtered in cold blood after he had given himself up. Béhuchet was hanged from the mast of his own ship, "to spite the king of France." Barbavara managed to make good his retreat and regained the open with his forty Genoese galleys, but the French were exterminated. It has been made out that their loss amounted to thirty thousand men. The English bought their victory dearly, but it was complete. The French navy was annihilated. That 24th of June, 1340, marks the naval début of the Valois dynasty.[d]

This first naval battle between the two nations very much raised the confidence of the English and the alacrity of the Flemings. Edward had not only a larger army of his own than in the previous campaign, together with the troops of the German allies, but, in addition, forty thousand Flemings under Artevelde, besides those of West Flanders, who proceeded in the direction of St. Omer. This immense host, instead of marching to meet and overwhelm the French king, sat down before Tournay.

Edward sent from thence a challenge to Philip of Valois, as he styled him, to decide their quarrel by single combat, or by an encounter of a hundred knights on either side. Philip replied, on the last day of July, that such a title could not be addressed to him; that the writer was his liege, and had no right to enter his dominions. He promised to cast the intruder out of the kingdom without loss of time; and that, as to the Flemings, he was confident they would rally to their own lord. Philip marched to the neighbourhood of Tournay with an army as formidable as that which he brought in the preceding year; but neither party were prepared to engage in a general action. The French hesitated to attack, and eleven weeks' siege made no impression upon Tournay. Robert of Artois, who commanded the armed citizens of West Flanders, led them against St. Omer, not with the hope of capturing that important town, but for purposes of pillage and devastation. The Flemings were thus engaged in plundering one of the suburbs, when the French within, issuing by another gate, came round and surprised them in the rear, routing and slaying them as they fled, to the number of four thousand. This disaster made such an impression on the army of West Flanders, that a panic seized it on the following morning, and all fled and dispersed to their homes.

If the campaign of the preceding year had taught Edward how little was to be expected from the Walloon or the German, he learned this year that even the redoubtable Flemings would not enable him either to conquer France or to reduce Philip to just and reasonable terms. He therefore consented that Joan de Valois, sister of Philip and countess of Hainault, should seek to bring about an accommodation. Her efforts led to a six months' truce, consented to in order that plenipotentiaries from both monarchs might treat for the conclusion of a more definite peace.[b]

Thus ended the campaign of 1340, "a year of misery and calamity," says the continuator of Nangis; "although for two or three years past, the common people had been oppressed with very hard exactions, our misfortunes were much greater this time."[c]

[1340–1342 A.D.]

THE WAR IN BRITTANY

The belligerents had scarcely suspended hostilities on the northern frontier of France, when a quarrel arose in another quarter, giving equal facilities for English interference, and offering to Edward more sincere, zealous, and martial allies than the Flemings had proved, whether knights or artisans.[b] It also brought the English king much hope.

In 1341 hostilities were revived in Brittany where the two kings each sustained a different claimant for the ducal throne. The duke John III had just died, leaving no children. Should the duchy fall to the daughter of his eldest brother — whose death had preceded his own — Joan de Penthièvre, who had married Charles of Blois, or to his own younger brother, John de Montfort? The two pretendants set forth the Mosaic law, the edicts of the Roman empire, the Salic law, and tradition; the lawyers piled up innumerable authorities: but politics decided the question.

Charles of Blois was nephew to Philip VI; with him Brittany would be in closer dependence upon the crown. A parliamentary act pronounced at the château of Conflans decided the matter in his favour. John de Montfort hastened to England, and agreed to recognise Edward III as king of France. In view of his promise as vassal loyally to aid and defend the English king, he was to possess Brittany in fief.

Thus began one of those wars — marked by "engagements, sallies, gallant rescues, surprising feats of arms, and brave adventures" — so delightfully depicted by Froissart,[e] so grindingly oppressive to the people. Charles of Blois, supported by a numerous French army, among whom was the son of the king, besieged his adversary in the city of Nantes. Thirty Breton knights had been taken in a neighbouring castle. Charles, despite the piety which gained for him the name of "saint," and Duke John, who was later to glory in the title "the good," had these thirty knights decapitated and their heads thrown into the market-place by the ballistas. The terrified citizens capitulated; John de Montfort was imprisoned at Paris in the tower of the Louvre.[g]

The countess Joan de Montfort was at Rennes when she heard that her husband had been taken. With a heart full of grief she yet bravely consoled her friends and supporters; and showed them her little son, named also John like his father, saying, "Ah, my friends, be not bowed down for my lord whom we have lost; he is but one man. Behold my son who shall be, if God so wills it, his avenger and your benefactor. I will give you of my wealth and will provide for you a captain who shall bring you consolation."[e]

She then journeyed from Rennes to all the fortresses and towns, taking her son with her; she encouraged her men, reinforced her garrisons with troops and supplies; and came at length to Hennebon, where she wintered. She had chosen this place, situated as it was on the Blavet, not far from the sea, to have facile communication with England. With the advent of spring, officers and troops swarmed to Nantes to join Charles of Blois; and the siege of Rennes was begun. The city was taken after a valiant defence; and the French marched on Hennebon, which they bombarded with showers of stones and enormous rocks.[1g]

[1 Charles intrusted the siege to Louis of Spain, a descendant of Ferdinand de la Cerda — eldest son of Alfonso the Learned. Ferdinand's sons had been set aside in favour of their uncle. Some of this family took up their residence in France. This Louis de la Cerda was Ferdinand's grandson. In 1341 he received the title of "Admiral of France."]

Joan de Montfort defends Hennebon

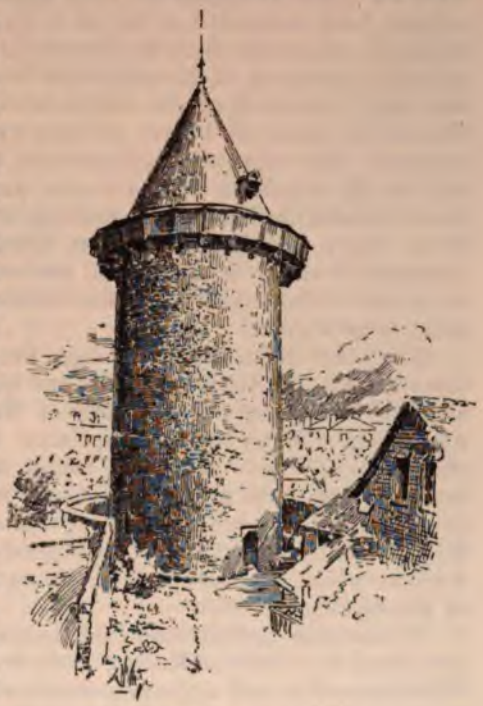
The countess, who had clothed herself in armour, was mounted on a war-horse, and galloped up and down the streets of the town, entreating and encouraging the inhabitants to defend themselves honourably. She ordered the ladies and other women to unpave the streets,[1] carry the stones to the ramparts, and throw them on their enemies. She had pots of quicklime brought to her for the same purpose. That same day, the countess performed a very gallant deed; she ascended a high tower to see how her people behaved; and, having observed that all the lords and others of the army had quitted their tents, and were come to the assault, she immediately descended, mounted her horse, armed as she was, collected three hundred horsemen, sallied out at their head by another gate that was not attacked, and, galloping up to the tents of her enemies, cut them down, and set them on fire, without any loss, for there were only servants and boys, who fled upon her approach. As soon as the French saw their camp on fire, and heard the cries, they immediately hastened thither, bawling out, "Treason! Treason!" so that none remained at the assault. The countess, seeing this, got her men together, and, finding that she could not re-enter Hennebon without great risk, took another road, leading to the castle of Brest, which is situated near. The lord Louis of Spain, who was marshal of the army, had gone to his tents, which were on fire; and, seeing the countess and her company galloping off as fast as they could, he immediately pursued them with a large body of men-at-arms. He gained so fast upon them, that he came up with them, and wounded or slew all that were not well mounted; but the countess, and part of her company, made such speed that they arrived at the castle of Brest, where they were received with great joy.

On the morrow, the lords of France, who had lost their tents and provisions, took counsel, if they should not make huts of the branches and leaves of trees near to the town, and were thunder-struck when they heard that the countess had herself planned and executed this enterprise; whilst those of the town, not knowing what was become of her, were very uneasy; for they were full five days without gaining any intelligence of her. The countess, in the meanwhile, was so active that she assembled from five to six hundred men, well armed and mounted, and with them set out about midnight from Brest, and came straight to Hennebon about sunrise, riding along one of the sides of the enemy's host, until she came to the gates of the castle, which were opened to her; she entered with great triumph and sounds of trumpets and other warlike instruments, to the astonishment of the French, who began arming themselves, to make another assault upon the town, while those within mounted the walls to defend it. This attack was very severe, and lasted till past noon. The French lost more than their opponents; and then the lords of France put a stop to it, for their men were killed and wounded to no purpose. They next retreated, and held a council whether the lord Charles should not go to besiege the castle of Auray, which King Arthur had built and enclosed. It was determined he should march thither, accompanied by the duke de Bourbon, the earl of Blois, Sir Robert Bertrand, marshal of France; and that Sir Hervé de Léon was to remain before Hennebon with a

[1] Lord Berners reads, "She caused damoselles and other women *to cut shorte their kyrtels*," instead of "to unpave the streets," as Mr. Johnes translates it. The words in D. Sauvage's edition are "*dépecer les chaussées*," to tear up the *causeways*, but when we consider that the streets of cities were very rarely paved at this period, Lord Berners' version appears the more probable, and may be reconciled to the text if we read "*chausses*" for "*chaussées*," which is not unlikely to be an error in transcribing.

[1342 A.D.]

part of the Genoese under his command, and the lord Louis of Spain, the viscount de Rohan, with the rest of the Genoese and Spaniards. They sent for twelve large machines which they had left at Rennes, to cast stones and annoy the castle of Hennebon; for they perceived that they did not gain any ground by their assaults. The French divided their army into two parts; one remained before Hennebon, and the other went to besiege the castle of Auray. The lord Charles of Blois went to this last place, and quartered all his division in the neighbourhood: and of him we will now speak, and leave the others. The lord Charles ordered an attack and skirmish to be made upon the castle, which was well garrisoned; there were in it full two hundred men-at-arms, under the command of Sir Henry de Spinefort and Oliver his brother.



Ancient Tower at Rouen

The town of Vannes, which held for the countess de Montfort, was four leagues distant from this castle; the captain whereof was Sir Geoffry de Malestroit. On the other side was situated the good town of Guingamp, of which the captain of Dinant was governor, who was at that time with the countess in the town of Hennebon; but he had left in his hotel at Dinant his wife and daughters, and had appointed his son Sir Reginald as governor during his absence. Between these two places there was a castle which belonged to the lord Charles, who had well filled it with men-at-arms and Burgundian soldiers. Girard de Maulin was master of it; and with him was another gallant knight, called Sir Peter Portebœuf, who harassed all the country round about, and pressed these two towns so closely that no provisions or merchandise could enter them without great risk of being taken; for these Burgundians made constant excursions, one day towards Vannes, and another day to Guingamp. They continued their excursions so regularly, that Sir Reginald de Dinant took prisoner, by means of an ambuscade, this Sir Girard de Maulin and thirty-five of his men, and at the same time rescued fifteen merchants and all their goods, which the Burgundians had taken, and were driving them to their garrison, called La Roche Perion; but Sir Reginald conquered them and carried them prisoners to Dinant, for which he was much praised.

We will now return to the countess de Montfort, who was besieged by Sir Louis of Spain in Hennebon. He had made such progress by battering and destroying the walls with his machines, that the courage of those within began to falter. At that moment the bishop of Léon held a conference with his nephew Sir Hervé de Léon, by whose means, it has been said, the earl of Montfort was made prisoner. They conversed on different things, in mutual confidence, and at last agreed that the bishop should endeavour to gain over those within the town, so that it might be given up to the lord

Charles; and Sir Hervé, on his side, was to obtain their pardon from the lord Charles, and an assurance that they should keep their goods, etc., unhurt. They then separated, and the bishop re-entered the town. The countess had strong suspicions of what was going forward, and begged of the lords of Brittany, for the love of God, that they would not doubt that she should receive succours before three days were over. But the bishop spoke so eloquently, and made use of such good arguments, that these lords were in much suspense all that night. On the morrow he continued the subject, and succeeded so far as to gain them over, or very nearly so, to his opinion; insomuch that Sir Hervé de Léon had advanced close to the town to take possession of it, with their free consent, when the countess, looking out from a window of the castle towards the sea, cried out, most joyfully, "I see the succours I have so long expected and wished for coming." She repeated this expression twice; and the townspeople ran to the ramparts, and to the windows of the castle, and saw a numerous fleet of great and small vessels, well trimmed, making all the sail they could towards Hennebon. They rightly imagined it must be the fleet from England, so long detained at sea by tempests and contrary winds.[e] The besiegers were forced to retire. About this time the traitor Robert of Artois fell in an engagement near Vannes.

Little by little, the two kings found themselves drawn personally into the contest. In 1342 Edward went himself to Brittany and appeared at the siege of Vannes, of Rennes, and of Nantes. The duke of Normandy drew up on his side an army comprising an infinity of barons and over forty thousand soldiers. The two forces met near Malestroit. The English, in numbers less than a fourth of their enemy, were careful to obtain a strong position. It was in the depth of winter; provision was lacking; cold rains flooded the two camps and multiplied disease. The papal legates proposed a truce, which was accepted on January 19th, 1343, to continue till the feast of St. Michael, 1346.[g]

It was also agreed that each monarch was to take the pope for arbiter, and plead his cause at Rome. Edward empowered certain commissioners to fulfil this office, and negotiate concerning "the right which he had, or might have, to the kingdom and crown of France." That he was prepared to insist upon this right, is proved by his order to the authorities in Guienne to have all appeals from that province to the king of France addressed to him, in that capacity, at his court in London.

PHILIP'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

These repeated truces were not the result of any diminution of inveteracy or of pretensions on either side, but of the impossibility to continue the payment and employ of such large armies. Of Philip's financial or political acts we have not ample records; but sufficient exist to show the immense difficulty he found in supporting the military expenses of such campaigns. If to find proper soldiers was no easy task, to raise wherewith to pay them was a difficulty still greater. In 1342, Philip VI issued an ordinance, establishing store-houses and gabelles of salt, a government monopoly, in fact, of this necessary of life. Taxes on trade, wholesale or retail, had for some time existed. The Italian merchants paid so much in the pound on imports and exports. The city of Paris, in order to pay for the men-at-arms which were furnished to the royal army, had been allowed to levy a duty on all sales and purchases in the markets. The fairs of Champagne had always paid a similar

tax. The king now levied this generally at the rate of five deniers the livre; but the chief resource was alternately debasing the coin, and raising its standard, until there was no ascertaining or being certain of its value for a month together. This incertitude put a stop to trade, and a scarcity coinciding with it, produced such universal distress, that partial insurrection and a general feeling of discontent were the consequence.

RENEWAL OF THE WAR WITH ENGLAND (1344 A.D.)

In the meantime, the pope made no progress in reconciling the two monarchs, or passing judgment upon their differences; and a cruel act of Philip's so aroused Edward's resentment, that although the term of the truce had not expired, he gave orders for recommencing war. Olivier de Clisson, a Breton noble, had been the prisoner of the English. Edward, it seems, released him instead of the bishop of Léon, also his captive. This sufficed to inspire Philip with doubts of his fidelity, and of a sudden, De Clisson, De Laval, and some twelve or thirteen Breton nobles, were seized, conveyed to Paris, and, without form of trial, or even public accusation, decapitated. Several barons of Normandy were soon after seized, and as summarily slain, one of them, of the family of Harcourt, alone escaping. These acts were not more cruel and unjust than the tortures, trials, and condemnations of Philip the Fair; but they were worse precedents, evincing a contempt for even the forms of justice, and making barefaced murder and assassination one of the regular proceedings of government.

Many of the decapitated nobles were at least friends of Edward. Without being guilty of treason, they might well have considered the rights of De Montfort in Brittany as superior to those of Charles of Blois. Edward denounced the assassinations committed by King Philip in issuing an order to his lieutenants to recommence the war. The French were by no means gladdened at this renewal of hostilities. They feared not so much the enemy as the tax-gatherer, and began to think that their intolerable burdens would be made permanent. In February, 1345, therefore, Philip found it necessary to issue a proclamation, stating that it was not his intention to unite the gabelle of salt or the tax of four deniers the livre to his domain: in other words, he promised that they were not to be permanent.

Edward had hitherto neglected Guienne, against which his enemies directed their principal efforts. The chief men of Bordeaux and Bayonne and the noblesse, true to the English crown, came to the festivity which Edward gave on the occasion of his instituting the order of the Garter, and their representations made so great an impression on him, that he despatched Lord Derby soon after, with three hundred knights, six hundred men-at-arms, and a greater number of infantry, to Bayonne. The French, not in force to defend the country south of the Dordogne, endeavoured to prevent Lord Derby from passing that river at Bergerac, and marching to the recovery of Périgord and the districts north of Bordeaux. The English accomplished this, the Genoese alone withstanding their arrows, and the troops which the French had raised in the county flying before them.

Derby marched into Périgord, and so well provided was he with what Froissart calls artillery, his engines throwing immense stones, that all the fortresses in upper Gascony submitted to him. The strongest of these was Auberoche, which fortress, as soon as Derby retired for the winter to Bordeaux, the nobles of the county in the French interest came to besiege. There were ten or twelve hundred of them, and Auberoche was hard pressed.

Lord Derby and Sir Walter Manny instantly left Bordeaux, with three hundred lances and six hundred archers, and, with this small force, surprised and fell upon the army besieging Auberoche at the time of supper. The French were routed, and all the chief nobles of the district taken: every English soldier had two or three. The consequence of this victory was not only the fall of Réole and the places held by Philip north of the Garonne, but the capture of the important town of Angoulême by Lord Derby. The general submission to the English commander was not only due to his prowess, but to his *gentillesse*, in preventing his soldiers from pillaging and burning the towns and massacring the prisoners, as was then generally the custom in war.

Whilst Lord Derby was reconquering Angoulême, Edward was endeavouring, by means of Artevelde, to turn the Flemish alliance to profit. Notwithstanding the English king's assumption of the arms and title of king of France, the Flemings seemed not disposed to go much further than neutrality. Artevelde himself ruling by the democracy, with the rich citizens opposed to him, felt himself neither secure at home nor able to direct the forces of the Flemings abroad. In order to strengthen his position, he proposed making the son of Edward (the Black Prince) count of Flanders. The English king came with his fleet to Sluys, and had an interview there with the town magistrates of the Flemings; they could not entertain his proposal without first consulting their townsmen. The people of Bruges and Ypres were not averse to having the prince of Wales for their count; but with Ghent it was otherwise: there the enemies of Artevelde accused him of wishing to sell his country to the foreigner. They asked what had been done with all the money proceeding from the revenues that had been sequestered. The "great treasure," they said, had been despatched to England. Artevelde hastened to Ghent to face his enemies, and refute them; but he had no sooner entered the streets than he perceived the efforts of his enemies to have prevailed, and the minds of his fellow-townsmen turned against him. He shut himself up in his hotel; harangued and tried to move the crowd from one of the windows. Their reply was, "Give us an account of the great treasure of Flanders." Artevelde promised that he would do this fully on the morrow. "No," replied the crowd; "we must have an account of it immediately, lest you escape to England, whither you have already sent your treasure." Artevelde then wept, and reproached them with "having made him what he was, and now wanting to kill him. Recollect that your trade was lost when I took the government, and that I recovered all for you — procured you abundance, and work, and peace; and for all the great good I did you, God knows I obtained little profit." Such reproaches were not calculated to move the mob, which clamoured but the more. Artevelde tried to escape to a neighbouring church; but his enemies seized him in the street, and slew him without mercy. Edward's first movement was to take vengeance on the Flemings for the death of their leader; but the towns of West Flanders convinced him that they regretted the act of the people of Ghent as much as he did.

EDWARD RETURNS TO FRANCE (1346 A.D.)

The reverses which the French monarch suffered in Guienne had been thus compensated by Edward's loss of his Flemish ally, and, at the same time, by the death of John de Montfort. That prince, after his escape from the Louvre, had led succours from England to Brittany, but was able to do little towards changing the aspect of affairs or the relative position of parties,

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when he died at Hennebon. All the efforts of Philip were directed towards repelling Lord Derby. The French king assembled his estates in the north and in the south, but more to appease discontent than to command succour or adhesion: he merely proposed continuing his present levies of money, on the understanding that they were to cease at the peace. An army was collected and sent, under the duke of Normandy, to the south. He recovered Angoulême, and laid siege to Aiguillon, an important fortress not far from Agen; but Sir Walter Manny and Lord Pembroke were within the walls, and infused such spirit into the garrison that during four months it defied the duke of Normandy and his army, said to number one hundred thousand men.

The obstinacy of the siege as well as the defence induced the English king to march to the succour of his general, for Lord Derby at Bordeaux had no force sufficient to encounter the duke of Normandy. An expedition was fitted out, at Southampton, consisting of four thousand men-at-arms and ten thousand archers, besides the Irish and Welsh.[b]

The English fleet set sail for the mouth of the Gironde, where a tempest hurled it back into the Channel. A new traitor, Godfrey d'Harcourt, advised landing in Normandy, and promised the aid of his vassals and the use of his entire province. The king landed (July 22nd, 1346), with thirty-two thousand men, at La Hogue St. Waast, in the Cotentin. He easily possessed himself of Barfleur, Cherbourg, Valognes, and St. Lô. The 26th, he was at the walls of Caen — a city larger than any in England excepting London.

The inhabitants sallied forth bravely to the encounter. "But as soon as they beheld the approach of the English," says Froissart,[c] "in three divisions, close and compact, a multitude of banners flying, and saw the archers, to whom they had not been accustomed, they were so frightened that they betook themselves to flight, and not all the world could have stopped them."

The English entered the city with the fugitives, slaying as they went, showing mercy to none. But the inhabitants recovered their courage and defended themselves in their homes; more than five hundred English were dead or wounded when Edward put an end to the fighting, promising the inhabitants to spare their lives.[1] Louviers, which was already great, wealthy, and commercial, was next taken. An attempt on Rouen had miscarried. He returned along the left bank of the Seine, burning Pont-de-l'Arche, Vernon, Poissy, and St. Germain. His couriers came within sight of Paris, and burned Bourg-la-Reine and St. Cloud.

Hereupon Philip assembled a large force and marched on the English. Edward rebuilt the bridge at Poissy and by it passed over the Seine and retreated to his fief at Ponthieu, to establish himself beyond the Somme. Philip fortified and sentinelled all the fords of that river. At that of Blanquetaque he posted one thousand men-at-arms and five thousand Genoese archers. Edward forced a passage; but realising that he could retreat no further he halted, and on the 27th of August disposed his army for battle on the slope of a hill near Crécy, his men being in good order and condition.[d] His knights and nobles were to fight on foot, there being but four thousand of them.

The total English army must have numbered from twenty-five to thirty thousand combatants. Froissart evidently underestimates its size as he

[1 Among the captures at Caen, was a document dated 1338, wherein the Normans offered Philip to reconquer England at their own cost, on condition he would reportion it among them after the fashion of William the Conqueror. It was used with good effect in rousing English spirit and continuing the wars. Some authorities regard it as a forgery.]

increases the total of the French force, doubtless in order to make the issue of the battle all the more marvellous.

But all exaggeration aside, the disproportion was enormous. Philip marched at the head of at least seventy thousand men among whom were about ten thousand men-at-arms, and a large body of Genoese archers whose numbers have been placed at from six to fifteen thousand.[d] But the French were a disorderly and undisciplined host while the English were professional soldiers and old campaigners, obedient to their chiefs and their sovereign.[b]



A French Knight of the Fourteenth Century

Philip had left Abbeville in the morning to go in quest of the enemy, then five miles distant. Heavy rains impeded the march. Four scouts sent to reconnoitre returned with the report that they had found the English waiting in the position they had chosen ; and they counselled the king to allow his soldiers a night's repose.

Philip gave the order to halt. But the great lords of France, instigated by vanity, moved one ahead of another, to get nearer the enemy. Neither the king nor his marshals could exercise any control over the troops, on account of the multitude of nobles each striving to assert his own authority. These rode about, without orders and without discretion, until they stumbled suddenly upon the camp of the enemy.[g]

FROISSART'S DESCRIPTION OF CRÉCY (1346 A.D.)

The English, who were drawn up in three divisions, and seated on the ground, on seeing their enemies advance, rose undauntedly up, and fell into their ranks. That of the prince[1] was the first to do so, whose archers were formed in the manner of a portcullis, or harrow, and the men-at-arms in the rear. The earls of Northampton and Arundel, who commanded the second division, had posted themselves in good order on his wing, to assist and succour the prince, if necessary.

You must know that these kings, earls, barons, and lords of France did not advance in any regular order, but one after the other, or any way most pleasing to themselves. As soon as the king of France came in sight of the English, his blood began to boil, and he cried out to his marshals, "Order the Genoese forward, and begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis." There were about fifteen thousand Genoese crossbow-men; but they were quite fatigued, having marched on foot that day six leagues, completely armed, and with their crossbows. They told the constable, they were not in a fit condition to do any great things that day in battle. The earl of Alençon,

[1 Prince Edward of Wales—the famous "Black Prince." He was but thirteen years old and only nominally in command of the first line under the guardianship of the earl of Warwick and Godfrey d'Harcourt.]

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hearing this, said, "This is what one gets by employing such scoundrels, who fall off when there is any need for them." During this time a heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunder and a very terrible eclipse of the sun; and before this rain a great flight of crows hovered in the air over all those battalions, making a loud noise. Shortly afterwards it cleared up, and the sun shone very bright; but the Frenchmen had it in their faces, and the English in their backs. When the Genoese were somewhat in order, and approached the English, they set up a loud shout, in order to frighten them; but they remained quite still, and did not seem to attend to it. They then set up a second shout, and advanced a little forward; but the English never moved. They hooted a third time, advancing with their crossbows presented, and began to shoot. The English archers then advanced one step forward, and shot their arrows with such force and quickness, that it seemed as if it snowed. When the Genoese felt these arrows, which pierced their arms, heads, and through their armour, some of them cut the strings of their crossbows, others flung them on the ground, and all turned about and retreated quite discomfited. The French had a large body of men-at-arms on horseback, richly dressed, to support the Genoese. The king of France, seeing them thus fall back, cried out, "Kill me those scoundrels; for they stop up our road without any reason." You would then have seen the above-mentioned men-at-arms lay about them, killing all they could of these runaways.

The English continued shooting as vigorously and quickly as before; some of their arrows fell among the horsemen, who were sumptuously equipped, and, killing and wounding many, made them caper and fall among the Genoese, so that they were in such confusion they could never rally again. In the English army there were some Cornish and Welshmen on foot, who had armed themselves with large knives; these, advancing through the ranks of the men-at-arms and archers, who made way for them, came upon the French when they were in this danger, and, falling upon earls, barons, knights, and squires, slew many, at which the king of England was afterwards much exasperated. The valiant king of Bohemia was slain there. He was called John of Luxemburg; for he was the son of the gallant king and emperor, Henry of Luxemburg; having heard the order of the battle, he inquired where his son the lord Charles was; his attendants answered that they did not know, but believed he was fighting. The king said to them: "Gentlemen, you are all my people, my friends, and brethren-at-arms this day; therefore, as I am blind,[1] I request of you to lead me so far into the engagement that I may strike one stroke with my sword." The knights replied, they would directly lead him forward; and in order that they might not lose him in the crowd, they fastened all the reins of their horses together, and put the king at their head, that he might gratify his wish, and advanced towards the enemy. The lord Charles of Bohemia, who already signed his name as king of Germany, and bore the arms, had come in good order to the engagement; but when he perceived that it was likely to turn out against the French, he departed, and I do not well know what road he took. The king, his father, had ridden in among the enemy, and made good use of his sword; for he and his companions had fought most gallantly. They had advanced so far that they were all slain; and on the morrow they were found on the ground, with their horses all tied together.

The earl of Alençon advanced in regular order upon the English, to fight with them; as did the earl of Flanders, in another part. These two lords,

[1 His blindness was supposed to have been caused by poison, which was alleged to have been given to him when engaged in the wars of Italy.]

with their detachments, coasting, as it were, the archers, came to the prince's battalion, where they fought valiantly for a length of time. The king of France was eager to march to the place where he saw their banners displayed, but there was a hedge of archers before him. He had that day made a present of a handsome black horse to Sir John of Hainault, who had mounted on it a knight of his, called Sir John de Fusselles, that bore his banner; which horse ran off with him, and forced his way through the English army, and, when about to return, stumbled and fell into a ditch and severely wounded him; he would have been dead, if his page had not followed him round the battalions, and found him unable to rise; he had not, however, any other hindrance than from his horse; for the English did not quit the ranks that day to make prisoners. The page alighted, and raised him up; but he did not return the way he came, as he would have found it difficult from the crowd. This battle, which was fought on the Saturday between La Broyes and Crécy, was very murderous and cruel; and many gallant deeds of arms were performed that were never known. Towards evening, many knights and squires of the French had lost their masters; they wandered up and down the plain, attacking the English in small parties; they were soon destroyed; for the English had determined that day to give no quarter, or hear of ransom from anyone.

Early in the day, some French, Germans, and Savoyards had broken through the archers of the prince's battalion, and had engaged with the men-at-arms; upon which the second battalion came to his aid, and it was time, for otherwise he would have been hard pressed. The first division, seeing the danger they were in, sent a knight in great haste to the king of England, who was posted upon an eminence, near a windmill. On the knight's arrival, he said, "Sir, the earl of Warwick, the lord Stafford, the lord Reginald Cobham, and the others who are about your son, are vigorously attacked by the French; and they entreat that you would come to their assistance with your battalion, for, if their numbers should increase, they fear he will have too much to do." The king replied, "Is my son dead, unhorsed, or so badly wounded that he cannot support himself?" "Nothing of the sort, thank God," rejoined the knight; "but he is in so hot an engagement that he has great need of your help." The king answered, "Now, Sir Thomas, return back to those that sent you, and tell them from me, not to send again for me this day, or expect that I shall come, let what will happen, as long as my son has life; and say, that I command them to let the boy win his spurs; for I am determined, if it please God, that all the glory and honour of this day shall be given to him, and to those into whose care I have intrusted him." The knight returned to his lords, and related the king's answer, which mightily encouraged them, and made them repent they had ever sent such a message.

It is a certain fact that Sir Godfrey d'Harcourt, who was in the prince's battalion, having been told by some of the English that they had seen the banner of his brother engaged in the battle against him, was exceedingly anxious to save him; but he was too late, for he was left dead on the field, and so was the earl of Aumarle his nephew. On the other hand, the earls of Alençon and of Flanders were fighting lustily under their banners, and with their own people; but they could not resist the force of the English, and were there slain, as well as many other knights and squires that were attending on or accompanying them. The earl of Blois, nephew to the king of France, and the duke of Lorraine his brother-in-law, with their troops, made a gallant defence; but they were surrounded by a troop of English

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and Welsh, and slain in spite of their prowess. The earl of Saint-Pol and the earl of Auxerre were also killed, as well as many others. Late after vespers, the king of France had not more about him than sixty men, every one included. Sir John of Hainault, who was of the number, had once remounted the king; for his horse had been killed under him by an arrow; he said to the king, "Sir, retreat whilst you have an opportunity, and do not expose yourself so simply; if you have lost this battle, another time you will be the conqueror." After he had said this, he took the bridle of the king's horse, and led him off by force; for he had before entreated of him to retire.



RUINS OF A FRENCH TOWER OF THE THIRTEENTH OR FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The king rode on until he came to the castle of La Broyes, where he found the gates shut, for it was very dark. The king ordered the governor of it to be summoned; he came upon the battlements, and asked who it was that called at such an hour? The king answered, "Open, open, governor; it is the fortune of France." The governor, hearing the king's voice, immediately descended, opened the gate, and let down the bridge. The king and his company entered the castle; but he had with him only five barons, Sir John of Hainault, the lord Charles of Montmorency, the lord of Beaujeu, the lord of Aubigny, and the lord of Montfort. The king would not bury himself in such a place as that, but, having taken some refreshments, set out again with his attendants about midnight, and rode on, under the direction of guides who were well acquainted with the country, until, about daybreak, he came to Amiens, where he halted. This Saturday the English never quitted their ranks in pursuit of anyone, but remained on the field, guarding their position, and defending themselves against all who attacked them.

The battle was ended at the hour of vespers. When, on this Saturday night, the English heard no more hooting or shouting, nor crying out to particular lords or their banners, they looked upon the field as their own, and their enemies as beaten. They made great fires, and lighted torches because of the obscurity of the night. King Edward then came down from his post, who all that day had not put on his helmet, and, with his whole battalion, advanced to the prince of Wales, whom he embraced in his arms and kissed, and said, "Sweet son, God give you good perseverance: you are my son, for most loyally have you acquitted yourself this day: you are worthy to be a

sovereign." The prince bowed down very low, and humbled himself, giving all honour to the king his father. The English, during the night, made frequent thanksgivings to the Lord, for the happy issue of the day, and without rioting; for the king had forbidden all riot or noise. On the Sunday morning, there was so great a fog that one could scarcely see the distance of half an acre. The king ordered a detachment from the army, under the command of the two marshals, consisting of about five hundred lances and two thousand archers, to make an excursion, and see if there were any bodies of French collected together. The quota of troops, from Rouen and Beauvais, had, this Sunday morning, left Abbeville and St. Ricquier in Ponthieu, to join the French army, and were ignorant of the defeat of the preceding evening: they met this detachment, and, thinking they must be French, hastened to join them.

As soon as the English found who they were, they fell upon them; and there was a sharp engagement; but the French soon turned their backs, and fled in great disorder. There were slain in this flight in the open fields, under hedges and bushes, upwards of seven thousand; and had it been clear weather, not one soul would have escaped.

A little time afterwards, this same party fell in with the archbishop of Rouen and the great prior of France, who were also ignorant of the discomfiture of the French; for they had been informed that the king was not to fight before Sunday. Here began a fresh battle, for those two lords were well attended by good men-at-arms; however, they could not withstand the English, but were almost all slain, with the two chiefs who commanded them, very few escaping. In the course of the morning, the English found many Frenchmen who had lost their road on the Saturday, and had lain in the open fields, not knowing what was become of the king, or their own leaders. The English put to the sword all they met[1]: and it has been assured to me for fact, that of foot-soldiers sent from the cities, towns, and municipalities, there were slain, this Sunday morning, four times as many as in the battle of the Saturday.[e]

MICHELET ON THE RESULTS OF CRÉCY

The battle of Crécy was not merely a battle; the event involved a great social revolution. The whole chivalry of the most chivalrous nation was exterminated by a small band of foot-soldiers. A new system of tactics came forth from a new state of society; it was not a work of genius or reflection. Edward III employed foot-soldiers for want of horse. The issue revealed a fact of which no one dreamed till then; namely, the military inefficiency of that feudal world which had thought itself the only military world. The private wars of the barons, and of canton against canton, in the primitive isolation of the Middle Ages, had not disclosed this truth; for then gentlemen were defeated only by gentlemen. Two centuries of defeats, during the Crusades, had not damaged their reputation. All Christendom was interested in disguising the successes of the misbelievers. Besides, these wars were waged so far away, that there was always some means of excusing every disaster: the heroism of a Godefroy and a Richard redeemed all the rest. In the thirteenth century, when the

[1 According to Froissart the English reconnoitring party slaughtered 7,000 in the fog. He declares that more perished on this Sunday than on the day of battle. The clerks sent by Edward to tally the dead reported 11 princes, 80 bannerets, 1,200 simple knights, and above 30,000 common men.]

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feudal banners were habituated to follow the king's, when out of so many seigniorial courts was formed a single one, brilliant beyond all the fictions of the romances, the nobles, diminished in power, increased in pride; humbled in their own person, they felt themselves exalted in their king. They valued themselves more or less in proportion as they shared in the galas of royalty.

In excuse for the disaster of Courtrai, the nobles pleaded their own hare-brained heroism, and the Flemish ditch. Two easy massacres at Mons-en-Pévêlle and Cassel retrieved their reputation. For several years they railed at the king, who forbade them to vanquish. An opportunity was afforded them at Crécy; the whole chivalry of the kingdom was there assembled; every banner flaunted in the wind, with all those haughty blazons, lions, eagles, castles, besants of the Crusades, and all the arrogant symbolism of heraldry. Opposed to this gallant array, excepting four thousand men-at-arms, all the rest were the barefooted English commons, the rude mountaineers of Wales, and the swineherds of Ireland, blind and savage races, that knew neither French, nor English, nor chivalry. They aimed none the worse for this at noble banners; they killed but so much the more: there was no common tongue in which to parley. The Welshman or Irishman did not understand the noble baron prostrate beneath him, who offered to make him rich, and he made answer only with the knife.

From that day forth there was many an unbeliever in the religion of nobility. Armorial symbolism lost all its effect. Man began to doubt that those lions could bite, or those silken dragons vomit forth fire and flames. The cow of Switzerland and of Wales seemed good armorial bearings too.

THE SIEGE OF CALAIS

This huge disaster only led the way to a greater one. Edward laid siege to Calais, and set himself down before it in fixed quarters for life or death. After the sacrifices he had made for this expedition he could not show his face to the commons until he should have accomplished his enterprise. Round the town he built a second town with streets, and wooden houses solidly and snugly constructed, to serve for residence through summer and winter.

The Englishman, established in good quarters, and with abundant supplies, let those within and without the town do what they had a mind. He did not even grant them battle, but preferred starving them out. Five hundred persons, men, women, and children, expelled from the town by the governor, died of cold and hunger between the town and the camp. Such, at least, is the statement of the English historian Knighton.[i] Froissart[e] says, on the contrary, that he not only let them pass through his army, but also gave them an abundant repast.

Edward had taken root before Calais, nor was the pope's mediation capable of forcing him from thence. News was brought him that the Scotch were about to invade England. He never stirred. His perseverance was rewarded, for he soon learned that his troops, encouraged by his queen, had taken the king of Scotland prisoner. The next year Charles of Blois was likewise taken in besieging La Roche de Rien. Edward had but to fold his arms and leave fortune to work for him.

It was matter of most urgent necessity for the king of France to succour Calais; but so great was his penury, so inert and embarrassed was that feudal monarchy, that it was not until the siege had lasted ten months that

he was able to put himself in motion, when the English were fortified and intrenched behind palisades and deep ditches. Having scraped together some money by a debasement of the coinage, the gabelle, the ecclesiastical tithes, and the confiscation of the property of the Lombards, he at last began his march with a huge army like that which had been beaten at Crécy. He had no way of reaching Calais except through marshes or over sand-hills. To take the former course would have been certain destruction, for all the passes were intersected and guarded. The men of Tournay, however, gallantly carried a castle by assault, without machines and by strength of hand alone.

The downs on the coast of Boulogne were under the fire of the English fleet. Those about Gravelines were kept by the Flemings whom the king could not suborn. He offered them heaps of gold, and the surrender of Lille, Béthune, and Douai; he would enrich their burgomasters, and make knights and lords of their young men. Nothing could tempt them; they were too much afraid of the return of their count, who, after a false reconciliation, had again escaped out of their hands. Philip could do nothing. He negotiated, he challenged; Edward remained unmoved.[1]

Horrible was the despair in the famished town when they saw all those banners of France, all that great army marching away and leaving them to their fate. Nothing remained for the people of Calais but to give themselves up to the enemy if he would condescend to accept their surrender. It was probable enough that the king of England, who had passed such a tedious time before Calais, who had sat down a whole year there, and spent in one campaign the enormous sum for those days of nearly £400,000 sterling, would give himself the satisfaction of putting the inhabitants to the sword, whereby he would certainly have gratified the English merchants. But Edward's knights told him flatly that if he treated the besieged in that manner his own men would never again venture to shut themselves up in fortresses for fear of reprisal. He gave way, and condescended to admit the town to mercy, provided some of the principal townspeople came, according to custom, bareheaded and barefoot, with ropes round their necks, and presented the keys to him.

There was danger for those who should first appear in the king's presence. There were instantly found in that little town, depopulated as it was by famine, six volunteers to save the rest. Nevertheless, the queen and the knights had to intercede with Edward, to prevent his hanging those gallant fellows. *f*

Thus did Calais fall into the hands of England a year after the battle of Crécy. Edward, according to Walsingham, *j* spent a month in the town, ordering and fortifying it. He sent all the knights captive to England, and expelled a certain number of the other French townsmen, replacing them by English. He induced thirty-six rich citizens of London, with their families, to settle there, with three hundred of lesser condition, bestowing upon them several privileges and advantages. He fixed at Calais the staple of tin, lead, and woollen cloth, and prohibited all persons from exporting or shipping these commodities to England, unless they took oath to unship them at Calais. Eustace of St. Pierre was amongst the French citizens who remained and recovered their property, on transferring their allegiance to the English king. His heirs afterwards forfeited the property by refusing this allegiance.

[1] Edward announces in a letter to the archbishop of York that he had accepted the challenge, and that the fight did not take place, because Philip marched off precipitately before the day, after having set fire to his camp.



THE BURGHERS OF CALAIS

Painted especially for "The Historians' History of the World" by R. E. Miller

SUSPENSION OF THE WAR (1347 A.D.)

The papal legates seized this opportunity of renewing their efforts to bring about an accommodation between the monarchs. The capture of Calais, indeed, rendered terms of peace more difficult to arrange; but that event, with the campaign which preceded it, rendered a peace desirable on both sides. Edward consented, although Rymer contains many proofs of his intention to sail again to the continent and renew the war. The truce was at first concluded for ten months, but was extended from time to time, the monarchs being occupied with other cares. It was a cessation but from great expeditions and large armies, for partisans on both sides did not relax in their schemes to surprise and their efforts to hurt. Although Scotland was included in the truce, Douglas would not keep the peace; neither would French or English in Gascony. The *brigands*, as foot-soldiers were called, associated in bands of thirty or forty to pillage towns, surprise castles, and then sell them for large sums. King Philip did not disdain to purchase the castle of Combourne from the brigand Bacon, for 24,000 livres. This brigand, says Froissart, "was as well armed and mounted as any knight in the army, and in as great honour with the king."

The truce was not even observed between the now hostile towns of Calais and St. Omer. Geoffrey of Charny, who commanded for Philip in the latter place, hearing that Edward had intrusted the command in Calais to an Italian, Aimery di Pavia, made offers of many thousand florins, if he would betray the town. Pavia pretended to consent, but warned Edward, who came with his son, the Black Prince, and a body of archers and men-at-arms. Pavia, by the king's order, allowed a division of the French to pass the bridge and enter the fortifications, where they were instantly surrounded and taken prisoners. And then Edward and his son attacked the French under Charny, routing, slaying, and capturing the greater number. The king himself in the fray had a personal encounter with Eustace de Ribeaumont, whom he compelled to surrender, and to whom he afterwards presented a chaplet adorned with pearls, as a token of friendship and admiration.

In Brittany the lieutenants of King Philip were not more successful than at Calais. Charles of Blois himself had set the truce at naught by an attack upon the castle La Roche de Rien. Whilst thus engaged, he was come upon unawares by the forces of the De Montfort party, his army routed, himself severely wounded, and taken prisoner (1347). From Brittany he was sent to England.

A more general renewal of the war was rendered impossible by the eruption of the plague, which in the summer of 1348 carried off large numbers, first in the south of France,[1] from whence it extended to Paris and the towns of the north. Tumours under the arms and in the groin were the peculiarities of the disease, which almost always proved fatal. Out of twenty persons in a village, says a chronicler, not two remained. The towns of the south were especially depopulated, such as Marbonne, Montpellier, and Avignon. The Laura of Petrarch was amongst the victims. Eight hundred died each day in Paris, where the loss could not have been less than one hundred thousand. Amongst the consequences of the epidemic are mentioned a great scarcity of provisions and a complete suspense of education from the lack of teachers.

[1 It had spread to France from Italy where its ravages were no less appalling. An extended notice of it is given in our history of Italy, Volume IX, where Boccaccio's vivid description of its terrors may be found.]

TERRITORIAL ACQUISITION

Whilst France was thus ravaged by pestilence and humiliated by defeat, Philip succeeded in annexing to the monarchy the important province of Dauphiné, which lay between its possessions of Burgundy and Provence, and gave France the entire region westward of the Alps. The two contiguous principalities and dynasties of Savoy and of Dauphiné had started up and grown together in continued rivalry. Although the Savoy princes were defeated in one great battle they were still more than a match for the dauphins, as the princes who kept their court at Vienne were called from the arms they had assumed. The dauphin had recourse to the aid of the king of France; and, by degrees, the protection which these afforded grew into suzerainty. Humbert, the last dauphin, was a strange and capricious character; he had the misfortune to have let fall from a window of his castle his only son, the child being dashed to pieces as he fell. This misfortune disturbed the reason of the prince, who determined to proceed to the Holy Land and sell or mortgage his possessions in order to raise funds for the purpose. He began by selling lands, which he possessed in Normandy, to John, duke of this province. At last the dauphin consented to sell the reversion of the principality. He agreed to appoint the second son of Philip of Valois, Philip of Orleans, as his future heir, in the event of his having no children.

This treaty, so advantageous to France, was concluded in 1343, and Humbert took his departure for Palestine. None ever expected to see the return of so witless a prince. The dauphin, however, did return, not only to resume the government of his paternal dominion, but to regret the reckless manner in which he had alienated the independence of Dauphiné. He began to seek to extricate himself from his engagements. Edward III tried to induce the emperor of Germany to confer upon Humbert the title of king; but, surrounded by the power and the emissaries of France, the dauphin was not able to shake off his dependency. He was finally (1349) induced to transfer his adoption to Charles, son of John, duke of Normandy, heir to the French throne. This was the future Charles V. Having accomplished this act, Humbert withdrew to a convent, whilst young Charles assumed the title of dauphin, which was afterwards borne by the heir to the throne, and the possession of that rich province.[b]

The money spent in the purchase of Dauphiné was at least well spent for France. A few days after the definite treaty with Humbert, Philip made another useful acquisition: he bought the lordship of Montpellier from the last king of Majorca, James II. This prince, despoiled of the Balearic Isles, Roussillon, and Cerdagne, by his cousin, the king of Aragon, sold Montpellier in order to raise an army with which to recover his realm. Don James was beaten and killed; Montpellier remained to France.[d]

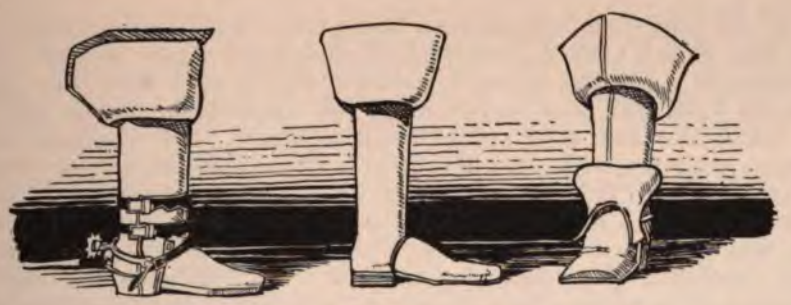
The plague of this year had been peculiarly fatal to princesses. The queen of France, Joan of Burgundy, the duchess of Normandy, wife of Prince John and daughter of the king of Bohemia, the queen of Navarre, daughter of Louis Hutin, perished under its influence. But no sooner had the pestilence disappeared, than marriage and its accompanying festivities became the order of the day. "The world," says the chronicler, "was renewed, but, unfortunately, not bettered; the enemies of France and of the church were no fewer, nor less powerful."

King Philip espoused a young wife, daughter of the queen of Navarre, just deceased. This princess, Blanche by name, had been destined to the duke of Normandy; but the king, his father, found her beautiful, and

married her himself. The duke of Normandy married a duchess of Burgundy, and the dauphin, Charles, espoused a daughter of the duke of Bourbon. Thus were celebrated the marriages of three generations of princes.

Philip of Valois did not long survive his marriage with Blanche. He fell ill, and expired at Nogent in August, 1350. The continuator of Nangis[c] relates that he called his sons, the duke of Normandy, and Philip of Orleans, afterwards of Valois, to his bedside, and pointed out to them the validity of his right to the crown, and the necessity of defending it strenuously, and without any concession, against Edward of England, with whom the truce was about to expire.

Philip of Valois was the first prince of truly chivalrous spirit that ascended the throne of France. Unfortunately for him, he succeeded at a period when chivalry was insufficient either to illustrate the warrior or achieve great results in war. Unfortunately, too, he derived from his predecessors those unscrupulous habits of wreaking vengeance and spilling blood, which they were taught to consider their sovereign right, as if royal power and descent cancelled every crime, and consecrated even the basest treachery and felony. French kings are lauded by their countrymen for having considered themselves above feudalism. Feudalism, however, had its laws of honour and its sense of right; with these, unfortunately, French kings too soon and too completely dispensed.[b]





CHAPTER VI

JOHN THE GOOD AND CHARLES THE WISE

[1350–1380 A.D.]

THE new king John was between thirty-one and thirty-two years of age. It was long since a king of France had ascended the throne in such critical circumstances. All the internal maladies which, ever since the days of Philip the Fair, had been undermining the constitution of the state had burst out at the first shock of external violence. The weakness of this monarchy, arbitrary without order, fiscal without finances, military without an army, which had failed to create for itself any other instrument or any other support than a body of legists; the fragility of this colossus with feet of clay was now revealed both to the foreigner and to France herself. A country desolated by plague, impoverished by a disastrous war and by a government more ruinous than plague and war, where the lowest depths of society were stirred by those dull mutterings which announce the distant tempest; a royalty despoiled, by deserved misfortunes, of the prestige of birth and grandeur which had survived its popularity; finally a war which set at stake not the position of some frontier but the existence of the dynasty and the independence of the nation: such was the inheritance which the first of the Valois had bequeathed to his son.[b]

King John inaugurated his reign by debasing the coinage to meet the expenses of the coronation which was celebrated at Rheims, on the 26th of September, 1350, with all the accustomed splendour. The brilliant train of princes who accompanied him drew upon themselves not only the glances but the hopes of the entire population.

Treachery, however, was on all sides. Already Philip of Valois had attempted to deal with it outside the regular forms of judicial procedure; the newly made king followed in his footsteps. Raoul, count of Eu and of Guines, constable of France, obtained of Edward III, whose prisoner he was, liberty on parole, and returned to Paris to present himself at court. John caused him to be arrested and confined in the Louvre. A few days after-

wards the constable was beheaded, and his property given to John of Artois, who assumed the title of count of Eu.

The office of constable was conferred upon a certain De la Cerda, Charles of Spain, brother of that Louis of Spain who had upheld the party of Blois in Brittany. The new constable, being the personal favourite of the king, found many rivals at court, and thus arose contentions that were to be the source of further troubles. For the purpose of anticipating acts of treason and of strengthening the attachment and devotion to himself of the most powerful nobles, John created a new order of chivalry; or, as Froissart says, "A fine company, high and noble, after the manner of the Round Table which existed in the time of King Artus [Arthur]." He also had another model, the order of the Garter, recently created by Edward III. Thus was instituted the order of the Star, which had for emblem a star in gold, silver, gilt, or pearls, and which the king bestowed on the three hundred knights who had proved themselves "the most valiant at arms and the most useful to the kingdom." He imposed upon them an oath that they would never flee before the enemy to a distance of over four arpents. On the first occasion the king designated the recipients of the order himself, but later the choice was decided by the majority of the members. This was the first time that a court order of chivalry had been created in France. The new institution was destined to be of but short duration, however, as its dissolution immediately followed the captivity of its founder.

Preparations were begun for a renewal of the war with England, and in expectation of this event John displayed great activity. Financial aid, which was to be a portion of the profits on the sale of beverages and merchandise, was voted to him by the provinces of Vermandois and Normandy, the city of Paris, and the bailiwick of Amiens, the assemblies stipulating in exchange the confirmation of certain privileges and the suppression of various abuses; among others the right of lodgment and of *prise en vertu* by which the king caused his expenses and those of his household to be defrayed by anyone with whom he chose to lodge.

We can form some idea of the deplorable state of the finances from the fact that during the course of the year 1351 John issued no less than eighteen ordinances altering monetary values, although neither the help of such expedients nor the subsidies voted by the provinces availed to bring about an equilibrium between receipts and expenditures. The treasury continued, as in the preceding reign, to pay annually only a part of the officers' wages and of the interest on the debt. There were also ordinances regulating the order in which the public expenses were to be met, just as to-day, in cases of bankruptcy, the succession in which creditors are to be paid is determined by law. In the case of certain outlays the government was extremely tardy in making payment, taking for its model the nobility, to the members of which great latitude was allowed. "Let no one," said King John, "wonder or be ill-pleased, for we take account of the respites and delays accorded to the nobles in the payment of their debts, and it would not be seemly that we should be in a worse condition than they."

The truces, although renewed from year to year, were imperfectly kept; hostilities continued to break out from time to time at different points, and there was not a campaign during which special engagements did not take place between parties of English or French knights. There were frequent skirmishes during 1351 in the neighbourhood of St. Jean d'Angély, and in 1352 between Guines and St. Omer. The war in Brittany had been kept up in desultory fashion since the capture of Charles of Blois in 1347, when

his wife, Joan de Penthièvre, took up the cause. The most celebrated of these minor combats was the *combat des trente*, fought in Brittany, August 1352, on the moor of Mi-Voie, between Josselin and Ploërmel.[c]

Robert de Beaumanoir, governor of the castle of Josselin, challenged the English captain Richard Bamborough who commanded at Ploërmel. They met on the lands of Josselin each with twenty-nine companions. The sixty champions fought on foot with short swords. "Such a combat," says Froissart, "had not been recorded for over a hundred years." It did not cease until all the combatants were either killed or badly wounded — four French and nine English, Bamborough among them, lay dead on the field. The rest of the English gave themselves up to the French. But such contests did not help matters, and so the war dragged on.[a]

TROUBLE WITH CHARLES OF NAVARRE

To the exterior dangers with which France was menaced was now added the calamity of civil war. The cause for this fresh trouble was to be found in the pretensions held by the king of Navarre, and the jealousy which he conceived against the new constable, Charles of Spain. This king of Navarre was Charles the Bad, so named for the rigour with which he had put down a sedition in Pamplona. A prince of the royal house of France on the side of his father, Philip of Évreux, he succeeded in 1349 not only to the kingdom of the Pyrenees, but to the county of Évreux, and the possession of several fiefs in Normandy. He was young, ambitious, enterprising, as were also his two younger brothers, Philip and Louis; and to attach him more securely to his interests, John betrothed to him one of his daughters, then a child, to whom he promised as marriage portion an income raised from the counties of Angoulême and Mortain. These counties having been ravaged by the English, Charles of Navarre demanded another dowry, and at the same time claimed indemnity for Champagne and Brie, former possessions of his mother which had been ceded to the crown during the preceding reign, but by treaty of which all the clauses had not been put regularly in execution. John refused to acknowledge these claims, or at any rate was in no hurry to satisfy them, and gave Angoulême and Mortain to Charles of Spain.



JOHN THE GOOD
(From an old French print)

The king of Navarre laid all the blame for this real or pretended breach of faith to the constable, and the two held a spirited altercation together in the presence of King John. With the king of Navarre was his brother Philip of Navarre, count of Longueville, who on being given the lie by the constable swore to be revenged. On leaving the scene of the quarrel he defied the constable and warned him to be on his guard against the infantes of Navarre. Charles of Spain paid so little heed to these menaces that he betook himself, insufficiently attended, to Laigle, the latest evidence of the

royal favour, which was situated not six leagues from Évreux, where dwelt his enemies. As soon as the count of Longueville learned of this move he left his home at night, accompanied by a troop of men-at-arms, and entering the hôtel of the constable, murdered the latter in his bed (1354).

The infantes of Navarre wrote letters of self-justification to several cities of France, and to the council of the king. At the same time they stocked their castles with supplies, assembled all their nobles, and opened up relations with the English, who were only too pleased to have a foothold thus established for them in Normandy. John, determined not to leave unpunished an act of personal vengeance that infringed seriously upon his own authority, marched in person against Évreux, and sent orders to the count d'Armagnac, his representative in Toulouse, to occupy Navarre with the whole strength of the southern troops.

This civil war, breaking forth so unexpectedly, was certain to renew the war with England, since it offered that country an unexampled opportunity to re-enter the lists. In fear of this event, the princes and princesses of the house of France, aided by the legate cardinal of Boulogne, offered their mediation and succeeded in bringing about an arrangement at Nantes, the 22nd of February, 1354. Payment of all that was due him, and the satisfaction of his legitimate claims were assured the king of Navarre, on condition that he should so far humiliate himself as to ask the king's pardon in open parliament. This he consented to do, but demanded that certain hostages be sent him. "And in the presence of all he asked pardon of the king for the deed wrought upon the said constable, for he had had just and sufficient cause thereto, all of which he was ready to reveal to the king then or at any time. Furthermore he declared and swore that he had not committed the act out of contempt for the king nor for the office of constable, and that nothing would afflict him so sorely as to be in the evil graces of the king." John accepted the excuse and took the offender back into favour.

This understanding retarded further hostilities, but only for a little time. John, who had been unaware of the secret relations entered into with the English, soon learned of them; whereupon Charles the Bad, fearing for his own safety, retired to Avignon, where he besought protection of the pope. In the month of November John entered Normandy, took possession of and sequestrated the estates of the king of Navarre, and commanded the officers who were in charge of the various castles to deliver them up to him. Six of the defenders refused to obey, among others those in charge of the castles of Cherbourg and Évreux.

The court of Avignon had not ceased its efforts to negotiate a treaty between England and France, and as it was necessary that this treaty should be a final one the king of Navarre must be included in its terms; hence the papal protection had not been refused him in his need. The negotiations were carried on actively during the winter of 1354–1355, but fell through like all preceding ones, and in the spring came definitely to an end. Edward demanded that his full sovereignty should be recognised over Guienne and Ponthieu, which provinces should be separated from the French crown. He also refused to continue to pay homage to France, and tried to stipulate for a semi-independence for Brittany. John refused to consider propositions so injurious, and in a legitimate spirit of national pride resolved to try once more the fortunes of war.

On all sides preparations for war were being carried on. The king of Navarre, having passed through Pamplona and English Guienne, embarked in July, 1355, at Cherbourg, which port it was his intention to open to

Edward III. The English sovereign manned a fleet for the purpose of descending upon the north coast of France; but contrary winds held him for a long time in the Channel, in sight of Jersey, and finally obliged him to return to the harbour of Plymouth.

In spite of this mischance the English remained full of ardour, and built great hopes upon the assistance of the Navarrese. John's counsellors represented to him that he could not with safety allow his enemies to retain allies of such energy and power, and that at any cost the interests of Charles the Bad must be separated from those of Edward III. With great repugnance, therefore, the king consented to grant certain concessions to the king of Navarre, who joyfully accepted them. A second treaty was signed at Valognes, by the terms of which Charles the Bad was reinstated in his French domains on consideration that he should make formal apology for having allied himself with the enemies of the kingdom (September 10th, 1355). He hastened to fulfil his promise, and for the second time came to the Louvre to ask public pardon of the king. His brother Philip, count of Longueville, could not be induced to follow his example, but remained true to the English side.

By depriving the English of the Navarrese alliance King John robbed them of their chief support, and obliged them to change their plan of campaign. Edward III landed at Calais, and in October made several incursions into Artois; but John marched against him in person, and prevented him from crossing the French frontier, thus paralysing all his efforts.

The English were more successful in the south, where they had sent a large army headed by the prince of Wales and the celebrated John Chandos. This army made a rapid and fruitful passage through Languedoc — pillaging Castelnaudary. Carcassonne, and a number of towns and castles — as far as the very gates of Montpellier without meeting with the least resistance. The cities were all entered, and the whole district, one of the richest in France, laid waste as Normandy had been in 1346. The English returned with five thousand prisoners and a thousand wagons laden with silver, objects of worth and merchandise, particularly cloths and velvets taken from Narbonne and Limoux. In order to transport safely all this booty to Guienne it was necessary to cross the Garonne at a distance of only three leagues from Toulouse. The count d'Armagnac, commander of Languedoc, was shut up in this town with forces more considerable than those of the English; he refused, however, to sally forth and arrest them as they passed by, in spite of the orders which had been brought to him by the new constable James de Bourbon, successor to Charles of Spain.

To meet the needs of the war, and to provide himself with a still greater force for the coming campaign, John resorted to all sorts of financial expedients. He ordered his treasurers to adjourn all payments out of the public funds, be they for what purpose they might; he made treaties for subsidies with several provinces, Auvergne, Normandy, Maine, and Anjou, and lastly convened the states-general at Paris.[c]

THE STATES-GENERAL OF 1355 A.D.

The estates of the north, or of the Languedoïl, convoked on the 30th of November, showed no tractable temper. It was necessary to promise them the abolition of that direct robbery called the right of seizure, and of the indirect one which was practised through the coinage. The king declared that the new impost should extend to all persons, and that it should be paid by

himself, the queen, and the princes. These fair words did not reassure the estates. They put no trust in the royal word, or in the royal tax-gatherers. They required that the money should be received by themselves, through collectors chosen by them; that accounts should be laid before them, and that they should meet again on the 1st of March, and again, after the lapse of a year, on St. Andrew's day.

To vote and receive taxes is to reign. No one in those days was aware of the full import of this bold demand of the estates, probably not even Étienne Marcel, the famous provost of the merchants, whom we see at the head of the deputies of the towns. The assembly purchased this royalty by the enormous concession of 6,000,000 livres parisis for the pay of thirty thousand men-at-arms. This money was to be raised by two imposts, on salt and on sales—bad imposts, no doubt, and bearing heavily on the poor; but what other could be devised in so pressing an emergency, when the whole south was at the enemy's mercy?

Normandy, Artois, and Picardy sent no deputies to these estates. The Normans were encouraged by the king of Navarre, the count d'Harcourt, and others, who declared that the gabelle should not be levied on their lands: that there should not be found a man so bold on the part of the king of France, who should enforce it, nor sergeant who should levy a fine, but should pay for it with his body. The estates gave way. They suppressed the two imposts, and substituted for them a tax on income: five per cent. on the poorest classes, four per cent. on middling fortunes, and two per cent. on the rich. The more one had the less he paid. The king, bitterly offended by the resistance of the king of Navarre and his friends, said that he should never have perfect joy so long as they were alive. He set out from Orleans with some cavaliers, rode for thirty hours, and surprised them in the castle of Rouen, where they were at table, having been invited by the dauphin. He had D'Harcourt and three others beheaded; the king of Navarre was thrown into prison, and threatened with death (April 16th, 1356). A rumour was set afloat that they had urged the dauphin to escape to the emperor, and make war on the king, his father.[e]

A third session of the states-general was held in Paris on the 8th of May, under the shadow of these tragic events, and new subsidies from the revenues were granted the king. John was particular to mislead the public as to the causes of the recent affair at Rouen, and it was everywhere given out that he had seized letters that furnished evidence of a conspiracy between the Navarrese and the king of England. Nevertheless the people suspected that the "real treason" of Charles of Navarre lay in his resistance to taxation, and this opinion joined to the current rumours as to the harsh treatment the captive had received, won him the compassion and the interest of the masses.

The people as a whole regarded in the same manner the captivity of the Navarrese, the execution of D'Harcourt, and the vengeance which King John took upon the authors of a revolt at Arras, which occurred almost simultaneously with the arrest of Charles the Bad. On the 27th of April the marshal D'Audeneham had entered Arras without resistance and had seized those guilty of rebellion. Twenty of these were decapitated in the market-place.[b]

King John, who had begun the campaign by seizing those strongholds of the king of Navarre in Normandy into which he might have introduced the English, at last advanced with a great army, as numerous as France ever lost. The whole country was covered with his runners; the English could

no longer find means of subsistence. Neither of the two hostile forces knew its own position. John thought the English were before him, and was hastening to overtake them, whilst they were really behind him. The prince of Wales, no better informed, thought the French were in his rear. This was the second and not the last time the English entangled themselves blindly in the enemy's country. Only a miracle could have saved them, and John's blundering rashness was no less.

THE BATTLE OF POITIERS (SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1356)

The army of the prince of Wales, partly English, partly Gascon, numbered 2,000 men-at-arms, 4,000 archers, and 2,000 light troops, brigands hired in the south. John was at the head of the great feudal gathering of the ban and arrière-ban, making fully 50,000 men. There were John's four sons, 26 dukes or counts, and 140 knights-banneret, with their banners displayed; a magnificent spectacle, but the army was none the better for all that.



A FRENCH KNIGHT OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

Two cardinal legates, one of whom was a Talleyrand, interfered to prevent the effusion of Christian blood. The prince of Wales offered to give up all he had taken, and to swear he would not serve for seven years to come against France. John refused the offer, as was natural; it would have been shameful to let those plunderers escape. He insisted that, at least, the prince of Wales should yield himself prisoner, with one hundred knights.

The English had fortified themselves on the Coteau de Maupertuis, a steep hill near Poitiers, planted with vines, and flanked with hedges and thorny thickets. Their archers covered all the summit. There was no need of attacking them. No more was requisite than to keep them there; hunger and thirst would have quelled them in two days. But John thought it more chivalric to subdue his enemy by force of arms. There was but one narrow path by which access could be obtained to the English position. The king of France sent horsemen forward to the charge. The archers shot down clouds of arrows, wounded and scared the horses, and threw them in confusion one on the other. The English seized this moment to charge down from the hill, and presently all that great army was in disorder. Three sons of the king of France retired from the field, by their father's command,[1] taking away with them an escort of eight hundred lances.

Meanwhile, the king stood fast. He had employed horsemen to charge up the hill; and with equal good sense, he ordered those about him to

[1 The continuator of Nangis[4] is responsible for this statement.]

[1356 A.D.]

dismount, and fight on foot against the English, who were coming upon them on horseback. John's resistance was as injurious to his realm as the flight of his sons. His brethren of the order of the Star were, like himself, true to their vow, and did not retreat. "And they fought by troops and by companies, as they chanced to meet and fall in together." But the multitude fled to Poitiers, which closed its gates. "So there was on the road and before the gate such a horrible spectacle of men slaughtered and trampled down as is wonderful to think of; and the French surrendered the moment they caught sight of an Englishman ever so far off."

Meanwhile, the field was still contested. "King John himself did wonders; he was armed with a battle-axe, with which he fought and defended himself. By his side was his youngest son, who well deserved the surname of the Bold, who guided his blind valour, crying out to him every moment: 'Look to your right, father! to your left!' But the throng of assailants continually increased, all being eager to make so rich a capture. The English and Gascons poured in so fast on the king's division that they broke through the ranks by force; and the French were so intermixed with their enemies that at times there were five men attacking one gentleman. There was much pressing at this time, through eagerness of taking the king; and those that were nearest to him, and knew him, cried out: 'Surrender yourself, or you are a dead man.' In that part of the field was a young knight from St. Omer, who was engaged by a salary in the service of the king of England; his name was Denys de Morbeyne, who for five years had attached himself to the English, on occasion of his having been banished in his younger days from France, for a murder committed in an affray at St. Omer. It fortunately happened for this knight that he was at the time near to the king of France, when the latter was so much pulled about; he, by dint of force — for he was very strong and robust — pushed through the crowd, and said to the king in good French: 'Sir, sir, surrender yourself.' The king, who found himself very disagreeably situated, turning to him, asked: 'To whom shall I surrender myself — to whom? Where is my cousin, the prince of Wales? If I could see him, I would speak to him.' 'Sir,' replied Sir Denys, 'he is not here; but surrender yourself to me, and I will lead you to him.' 'Who are you?' said the king. 'Sir, I am Denys de Morbeyne, a knight from Artois; but I serve the king of England, because I cannot belong to France, having forfeited all I possessed there.' The king then gave him his right hand glove, and said: 'I surrender myself to you.' There was much crowding and pushing about, for everyone was eager to cry out: 'I have taken him.' Neither the king nor his youngest son, Philip, was able to get forward and free himself from the throng."

The prince of Wales did honour to the unparalleled good fortune that had placed such a pledge in his hands. He took good care not to treat his captive otherwise than as a king; in his eyes that captive was the true king of France, and not John of Valois, as the English had been used to call him. It was of the last importance to the prince that John should be king in reality, so that the kingdom might seem itself taken captive in the person of its sovereign, and should ruin itself to ransom him. He waited on John at table, after the battle; and when he made his entry into London, he set him on a tall white horse (an emblem of suzerainty), whilst he himself followed on a little black hackney.

The English were not less courteous to the other prisoners. They had twice as many of them as there were men to guard them, and dismissed the greater part of them on parole, pledging them to come at Christmas, and

pay the enormous ransoms they set upon them. The prisoners were too good knights to fail. In this war between gentlemen, the worst that could happen to the beaten party was to go and take their part in the festivities of the victors, to hunt and joust in England, and enjoy the courtesy of the English; a noble war, doubtless, which crushed none but the villein.

Great was the dismay in Paris when the fugitives from Poitiers, with the dauphin at their head, brought news that there was no longer a king or barons in France, but all were killed or taken.[1] The English, who had withdrawn for a moment to secure the captives, would, doubtless, speedily return. This time it might be expected that they would take, not Calais, but Paris and the realm.[e]

THE STATES-GENERAL OF 1356-1357 A.D.

The king a captive, the nobles prisoners or destroyed — the people alone remained to save France. This younger member, disinherited in the political family of the Middle Ages, took in hand the government of the realm, now falling to pieces through the incapacity of its elder brothers. It was not this one that had been vanquished at Crécy and Poitiers. These defeats, on the contrary, brought it forward, for it was evident that, scorned as it was by the nobility, at least it had not conducted itself worse, and perhaps even may have made a better show against the English archers than the knights. The people ruling — that was a novel and extraordinary thing. Nevertheless they were not, at least in their leaders, totally inexperienced in the conduct of affairs. Former progress had prepared them somewhat; the common people were in parliament, the church, and the universities; they had control of all commerce and had formed vast industrial corporations. The clergy and commerce (which was soon to become the aristocracy of the third estate) both furnished a leader to the new movement started after the battle of Poitiers — Robert Lecoq, bishop of Laon and president of the parliament, and Étienne Marcel, provost of the merchants of Paris.

Marcel's first care at the news of the disaster was to finish the fortifications of the capital, to place cannon on them, and to barricade the streets. The dauphin Charles arrived ten days after the battle, but the people did not make much of this young prince. His conduct at Poitiers had been decidedly equivocal; he had been one of the first to flee. He took the title of lieutenant of the king of France and convoked the states-general at Paris for the Languedoïl, at Toulouse for the Languedoc (October 17th, 1356). The assembly at Paris had eight hundred members, of which four hundred came from the cities and towns; Marcel presided over the third estate and Robert Lecoq over the clergy. The nobles were few in number; their principal leader was John de Pecquigny, lord of Vermandois, and a friend of the king of Navarre. The three orders deliberated separately, but to bring unity into their actions nominated a mixed commission of eighty members. It formulated the wishes of the states-general and demanded for the reform of the kingdom the summons and trial, before judges nominated by the states-general, of the king's chief officers of finance and justice, accused of having perverted and sold judgments; the deliverance of the king of Navarre; the establishment of a council of four prelates, twelve lords, and twelve bourgeois elected by the states-general, without which the dauphin

[1 The French left 11,000 dead on the field of battle. The English loss was but 2,500, and they made prisoners of 13 counts, 1 archbishop, 70 barons, and 2,000 armed men, not counting persons of less importance.]

could give no orders and which would control the entire government. On these terms they granted the dauphin one and a half tenths for one year of the revenues of the three orders. In truth, by their revolutionary changes the people placed themselves on the throne and undertook the burden of public affairs and the public welfare. The states-general of the Languedoc, less radical, voted a levy of fifteen thousand men with the necessary money to maintain them.

The dauphin would not listen to an agreement with these conditions. He played skilfully with the deputies of the third estate, in persuading them to consult their constituents once more, while he himself would go to ask help of his uncle the emperor of Germany. Charles IV was then putting forward his famous "golden bull" in the Diet of Nuremberg. The dauphin appeared there. He had strong hopes that on his return he would find the deputies dispersed and discouraged. Far from that, the provincial councils had reassembled, approved the measures of the states-general, and the whole country declared itself in the same fashion (1357). On the 3rd of March the dauphin was obliged to call a general assembly at the palace. The bishop of Laon acted as spokesman. He demanded that the prince dismiss twenty-two of his councillors or servitors and authorise the formation of a council of thirty-six members elected by the states-general "to provide for the needs of the kingdom, and which everyone would be compelled to obey." Commissioners at first had to be sent into all the provinces, but the states finally acquired the faculty of handling the government of its own creation by endowing itself with the power to meet twice a year without convocation. As to reforms, relating for the most part to finances and justice, the dauphin provided for them in the "grand ordinance of reformation." By this memorable charter he promised to impose no taxes without the vote of the states-general, to divert no money from the treasury, and to leave the levy and expenditure of taxes to the states-general's delegates, to make justice impartial and prompt, to sell judiciary offices no longer, and not to alter the coinage from a model which the provost of the merchants was to furnish. The right of seizure, forced loans, judgments by commissioners, and alienation of the crown domains were some of the abuses corrected by the ordinance which at the end declared the members of the states-general inviolable and authorised armed resistance to all illegal procedure.

The popular government of 1357 unfortunately did not have in its bosom sufficient harmony, strength, and experience to maintain the important conquest the people had just made. Moreover its situation was one of the most difficult; its credit was shaken by King John, who from his prison forbade the states-general to assemble and the people to pay the taxes they themselves had voted. The rural committees were in the most deplorable state. Overburdened by taxes, by the heavy ransoms which their captive lords extracted by torture, the peasants could no longer cultivate a land that had moreover been ravaged in the war. They developed into vagabonds and preferred to become the accomplices rather than victims of the bands of discharged soldiers from every country, which the war had left upon French soil.

In the fourteenth century the name brigand was given to this licensed soldiery, nearly all of whom, as we are aware, fought on foot, and were, as a general rule, but slenderly equipped; they carried, as a part of their equipment, a small fine coat of mail, which took its name of brigantine from them. The pay of the mercenaries being stopped in time of truce or between the different expeditions, they turned to the daily practice of rapine and

plunder for their means of subsistence, which brought them in more than their pay. A crowd of adventurers and loafers joined forces with them, among the number being many noblemen. As to the rest, the following passage from Froissart[g] sets forth vividly the methods by which the brigands carried on their terrible profession:

"And the poor brigands always succeeded in sacking and pillaging towns and castles, and got thence such wealth as was marvellous, and some of them became rich, especially those who had made themselves leaders and captains of other brigands; there were among them some who even had as much as forty thousand crowns. Indeed and in truth right marvellous were the things they did. When — and this happened very frequently — they espied a large town or a fine castle, distant a day's journey or two, twenty or thirty brigands would band themselves together and travel night or day by secret ways, and just as day broke they would enter the town or castle they had descried and set fire to a house. The townspeople, fearing that an army of a thousand warriors had come to burn their town, escaped each as best he might, and the brigands sacked houses, coffers, and libraries, seizing whatsoever they could find and departing laden with booty."



A French Nobleman of the Fourteenth Century

In spite of such horrors no profession was more lucrative or held in greater honour in the fourteenth century than that of the brigand. Even royalty, whose duty it was to protect the peasants, showed itself eager to make advances to the brigands and to reward their strange exploits. Philip of Valois proposed to Croquart, the famous chief of the brigands settled in Brittany, to knight him, marry him well, and pay him an annual income of two thousand pounds, if he would place himself at his disposal. This same king, hearing of the extraordinary cleverness by which one Bacon, a brigand who harassed Languedoc, had surprised the castle of Chambon in the Limousin, wished to keep by his side so daring and crafty a captain; so he made him his sergeant-at-arms and loaded him with honours. Too often the kings did not even attempt to protect the unhappy victims of the brigands. On the contrary they helped to complete the ruin of the peasants by authorising the abuse of *le droit de prise* (the right of seizure), and above all by arbitrarily raising or lowering the money standard, according to whether the question was one of levying taxes or of paying debts.[h]

THE DAUPHIN REPUDIATES THE *GRANDE ORDONNANCE* (1358 A.D.)

Under such existing conditions the dauphin believed himself powerful enough to declare that he would no longer tolerate trustees. February 8th, 1358, he revoked the *grande ordonnance*, and thus destroyed the popular government. This was a complete rupture with the states-general and the resumption of absolute power by the crown.

[1358 A.D.]

Against the dauphin the people called Charles of Navarre, who was dragged from his prison. This ambitious prince, skilful and eloquent, became the orator of the market-places, promising to defend the country and letting it be understood that he was not without some claim to the throne of France. The dauphin hoped to balance this new kind of influence with the same means. He went to the Pré-aux-Clercs; and Paris, as if by a magical transformation, suddenly beheld herself in the midst of the Middle Ages adorned with two forums. But the dauphin lost again, by his unfortunate alteration in the coinage, the sole means indeed of raising money without calling the states-general together. Marcel had armed the bourgeoisie at once and given them, as a rallying sign, caps part red and part blue. At the head of a company of this militia he made his way into the dauphin's palace, and had the marshals of Champagne and Normandy, the two principal officials, put to death; with his own hand he placed the red and blue cap upon the prince's head as a pledge of security and said to him, as the two bodies were thrown to the crowd, "I demand that you sanction the deaths of these traitors, for it is by the will of the people that this has been done" — of a small portion of the people, it might be added — the Parisian bourgeoisie (1358).

Indeed, the further they went the more the revolution they undertook lost its general character. The provincial deputies separated from their constituents lost their enthusiasm, while the commune of Paris, never away from their own hearths, remained numerous, ardent, and popular. The states-general, jealous of the commune's influence, permitted itself in part to be removed to Compiègne by the dauphin. The nobles gathered about the prince. He had seven thousand lances with whom he lived freely on the country between the Seine and the Marne, ravaging the whole land as far as Paris, which was suffering from famine. This maddened the peasantry of the Beauvoisis, of Brie, of Valois, Laon, and Soissons.

THE *JACQUERIE* (1358 A.D.)

It is quite unnecessary to lay stress upon the sufferings of the villeins here. The days were no more, as we have seen, when the lords of the manor, although they considered themselves of different clay from their serfs, defended them at the peril of their lives. Of the feudal institutions, nothing remained but the oppression. Ruined by the love of luxury, by gambling, by debauchery, by the necessity of paying a heavy ransom — preferring to run into debt rather than to impose privations upon themselves, and to wrest from those around them by means of blows, imprisonment, or the pillory the miserable savings they had laid by for bad times rather than to pay their debts, which would have prevented their contracting new ones — they used and abused the right to command so far as to make all testaments, all marrying, on their estates, dependent on their express permission. They even scoffed at their victims, giving them the name of "Jacques Bonhomme" in derision, on account of their awkwardness in carrying weapons, and of their patience in enduring all things. "Save a villain from hanging, he'll cut your throat; show a villain the steel, and he kneels," says a proverb of these times (*Oignez vilain, il vous poindra: poignez vilain, il vous oindra*).

To these permanent, and in some respects regular evils, aggravated still more by the caprices, the exactions of the kings, or at least, of their officers, were added, to render them more intolerable, the accidental evils of life and war. A series of bad years had brought famine and the plague. The

Navarrese of Philip of Longueville, the brigands of James Pipes, and other generals devastated all that the English had spared, and that a few only too uncommon inhabitants had not allowed to lie fallow. The Navarrese, the brigands, and the English inspired them with such terror that the unhappy villeins would leave their dwellings and fields, spend the nights on the islands or in boats moored in the middle of the river, and place one of their number in the church belfry in order that he might ring the tocsin, while they hid themselves in the bowels of the earth, in those subterranean places which were still to be found in the eighteenth century, along the Somme, from Péronne to its mouth.

Thus the hardships which nature and warfare imposed upon those living in country places made them more sensitive to those which their masters, if better advised or more humane, might have spared them. Their original devotedness had disappeared, as had their protection, of which they were no longer the object, and given place to muttered imprecations, to a vague and far-away desire to shake off the yoke. The hatred increased every day, but it still resembled a fire smouldering beneath the ashes. In order that it should burst forth, change into violence and activity, it was only necessary that a new exigency, a lesser one perhaps than many others to which they were subject, but more startling to their simple good sense, should arise in some wise to place the weapons in their hands. The occasion for movement was the fifth article of the ordinance, issued at Compiègne, which enjoined all those whom it might concern to put the strongholds in a state of defence at their own cost and expense. They whom it concerned were the unfortunate peasants, who were thus forced to pay for out of their savings, and to rebuild with their own hands, those citadels which when restored would make the oppression more intolerable than ever. This it is that caused a contemporary to say that the rebellion began with a protest against injustice.[f]

About a hundred of the peasants met at Clermont first, and raised the cry of "Death to gentlemen!" They elected a leader, called William Karl, or Callet, and rushed to the attack and destruction of the houses of the nobles. These hundreds soon swelled to thousands, and there was no excess of which they were not guilty: they slew the nobles themselves, with their wives and children, first treating the women with every indignity, their avowed purpose being to extinguish the race. They roasted a noble before the eyes of his family, and sought to make its members eat the flesh of the victim. Saracen or Christian, says Froissart,[g] never committed such iniquities.

There remains a doubt as to how far the townsfolk may have excited their rustic brethren to this revolt; but it does not appear that any great town made common cause with them. They were repulsed from Compiègne, though they entered Senlis. Marcel endeavoured to make use of the Jacques in humbling the noblesse and destroying their strongholds, without the infamy of outraging women and slaying children. But whilst Marcel was politic enough to make this attempt, the king of Navarre could not but sympathise with the noblesse, and fly to their aid. The Jacques, knowing his liberal reputation, were inclined to negotiate with him, which enabled the king of Navarre to entice the chief and some of his officers to parley. While thus engaged, they were surprised, bound, and decapitated. This is not the last instance of a magnate betraying those who trusted, and massacring those who could have best supported him. Charles afterwards attacked the army of Jacques, and slew three thousand of them.



XI. The Jacquerie

(*From the painting by Georges Rochegrosse*. 1885)



[1358 A.D.]

The regent, after holding the estates of Champagne and Vermandois, and procuring their adhesion, took his principal military post at Meaux in order to straiten Paris. To this place not only did his troops repair, but the ladies of the court — the duchesses of Normandy and Orleans, as well as the wives of the noblesse — betook themselves to Meaux as to a place of safety. The market of this town, surrounded by walls and by water, had been rendered a fortress by the regent. The Jacques attacked the town, in concert with a few Parisians, and easily made themselves masters of all save the market. The count of Foix, and the captal De Buch, Gascon nobles, were returning from a campaign with the Teutonic knights of Prussia against the pagans, when they heard of the peril of the noble ladies at Meaux. Though the captal was a subject of King Edward, he nevertheless flew with De Foix to the rescue of the three hundred ladies menaced by the Jacques; and these were routed and driven into the Maine with great slaughter. The victors of Meaux then attacked Senlis; there the citizens and Jacques fought together, and made a most obstinate resistance. But the nobles, reinforced by knights and nobles from Brabant, Hainault, and the Gascon hordes, annihilated the peasantry, notwithstanding their numbers; and the insurrection of the Jacques was drowned in blood.*j*

DEATH OF MARCEL

The effects of the *Jacquerie* reached Marcel; discord appeared in the commune. Obliged to seek outside help, the provost of the merchants called upon the king of Navarre and agreed to prepare the way for him to the throne of France. On the night of July 31st, 1358, as Marcel was changing the guard at the Porte St. Denis through which Charles of Navarre was to enter, he was massacred, together with those who were with him, by the alderman, John Maillart, who had discovered the plot.[1] The dauphin returned to Paris with an army and had Marcel's chief companions decapitated or exiled.*f*

It is necessary to dwell upon the memorable part played by Étienne Marcel and the municipality of Paris in the political and social crisis which followed the disaster of Poitiers and the captivity of King John. In the middle of this fourteenth century, so uncivilised and sombre, a man appeared who, by wonderful instinct, laid down and nearly succeeded in obtaining the adoption of the essential principles on which modern society is founded; that is, the government of the country by elected representatives, taxes voted by the representatives of the taxpayers, the abolition of privileges founded upon right of birth, the extension of political rights to all citizens,

[1 Maillart entered into communication with two leaders of the dauphin's party, Pépin des Essarts and John de Charny. All three with their men "came properly armed, a little before midnight, to the porte St. Denis, where they found the provost of the merchants with the keys of the gate in his hand. Upon this, John Maillart said to him, calling him by his name, 'Étienne, what do you do here at this time of night?' The provost replied, 'John, why do you ask it? I am here to take care of, and to guard the city, of which I have the government.' 'By God,' answered John, 'things shall not go on so: you are not here at this hour for any good, which I will now show you,' addressing himself to those near him; 'for see how he has got the keys of the gate in his hand, to betray the city.' The provost said, 'John, you lie.' John replied, 'It is you, Étienne, who lie'; and rushing on him, cried to his people, 'Kill them, kill them: now strike home, for they are all traitors.' There was a very great bustle; and the provost would gladly have escaped, but John struck him such a blow with his axe on the head, that he felled him to the ground, although he was his comrade, and never left him until he had killed him. Six others, who were present, were also killed; the remainder were carried to prison. They then put themselves in motion, and awakened everyone in the different streets of Paris." *g*]

and the subordination of traditional sovereignty to that external sovereign known as the nation. Marcel was that man.

Doubtless there are blots in Marcel's life. His siding with the Jacques is to be reproached against him as well as his friendship with the king of Navarre, "the third aspirant in the midst of the rival ambitions of France and England." But it was a question of putting down an absolute, unlimited power. If the aim is the entire remodelling of the organisation of society, when the end in view is the high ambition of snatching the direction of public affairs from the hands of an entire class, history shows that such objects have never been reached without bloodshed. When, four centuries later, the substitution of a representative government for a monarchy founded upon divine right caused so many heads to fall and entailed so much agony, is it to be wondered at that the revolution undertaken by Marcel should follow the same course and suffer the same fate? After all, if the bold provost shed the blood of his adversaries, he was playing a losing game, and staking his own life against the dominion of the nobility. Which is the more illustrious victim, the marshal or himself? Which executioner should be blamed? Marcel failed apparently, because the time was not yet ripe; he had, by a great bound into the future, put himself ahead of his epoch. But he threw an external lustre over the provosts of Paris, and as an eminent historian said, when he demanded that statues should be raised in memory of Marcel, "he is the greatest personage of the fourteenth century." *k*

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS; EDWARD IN FRANCE (1359 A.D.)

The dauphin had returned to Paris, but the state of the kingdom seemed desperate. People, however, spoke of peace. Weary of the sumptuous hospitality he had received at Windsor, John had treated with the king of England. He had abandoned to him the shores of the Channel, that is to say Calais, Montreuil, Boulogne, Ponthieu, and Normandy; the whole of Aquitaine, which included Gascony, Bordelais, Agénois, Quercy, Périgord, the Limousin, Poitou, Saintonge, and Aunis; also Touraine and Anjou; and besides this four million gold crowns for the king's personal ransom. It was the greatest and best part of France, including the entrances to all the rivers. When the treaty was brought to Paris the dauphin refused to execute it, and to strengthen himself for the contest with his father called, at Paris on the 19th of May, 1359, the semblance of an assembly of the three orders, which rejected the shameful terms and added that King John must stay in England until it pleased God to show him the way out.

Five months after, October 28th, 1359, Edward landed at Calais with his four sons, the most powerful lords of his kingdom, six thousand coats of iron armour, six thousand carts loaded with ammunition, ovens, mills, forges, tents — everything necessary to live comfortably, even to falcons and hunting-packs, and skiffs of rough hides for fishing. "There was such a multitude of armed men that all the country was covered, and so richly armed and bedecked that it was a marvel and great joy to see their shining armour, waving banners, and arranged contests. And again there were five hundred pages with shovels and picks who went before the wagons and opened the way and cut the thorns and the bushes to make the transport easier."

The weather did not favour the expedition, for it rained incessantly. On the 30th of November, the English arrived before Rheims. John de Craon the archbishop shut the gates upon them and valiantly repulsed all their attacks. Edward had announced a long time before that he wished to

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be crowned there. He passed some weeks before its walls, unable to take it by storm, but hoping each day that he would be attacked and win a great battle as Crécy and Poitiers. Finally, nobody appearing, he turned back, going leisurely across country to Châlons, Bar-le-Duc, Troyes, and Tonnerre ; the duke of Burgundy obtained from the pillage some two hundred thousand gold crowns. Then Edward marched straight towards Paris, and established himself about two leagues from the town at Bourg-la-Reine. The English heralds approached to offer battle to the dauphin, who refused it. A knight of the enemy, Sir Walter Manny, advanced to the very ramparts, seeking for single combat, but Charles expressly forbade his warriors to go outside the barriers. He wanted none of this war as the nobles were conducting it at present.



A French Page, Fourteenth Century

And so the citizens shut up in their towns and the nobles in their castles let pass the storm which could not reach them behind their walls. Everything fell upon the peasants, who dared not even defend themselves. But misery finally gave them courage and despair brought them strength. They came to dare to look in the face the iron-sheathed men before whom they used to tremble, and at several points the foreign aggressor began to meet with local popular resistance, more dangerous for him than the great battles of the feudal princes. Edward himself wearied of this inert but invincible resistance. It was said that the English king and his followers making their way, weary and discouraged across the plains of Beauce, encountered a terrific storm which seemed a warning from heaven, and that the king made a vow before Notre Dame de Chartres, to do all he could to re-establish peace between the two nations. The king's heart had not been turned suddenly by the storm ; it was the fatigues of a war that was bringing no glory, for there were no battles and no booty, because everything had been captured or hidden in the fortresses.

The Story of Le Grand Ferré

One of the most curious incidents of this popular resistance is thus described by a chronicler of the age, the continuator of Nangis, in language not without charm in spite of many Latin barbarisms.[1]

There was one strong enough place, in a little Longueil village, close to Compiègne. The inhabitants, seeing they would be in great peril if the enemy should take possession of it, demanded of their ruling lord, and of the abbé of St. Corneille whose serfs they were, permission to fortify their village. After having obtained this, they collected provisions and arms, chose for captain a fine strong man named Guillaume des Alouettes from among themselves, and swore to defend their town with their last breath. When this was done and became known, many hastened from neighbouring

villages for protection. The captain had for servant a man as brave as he was tall and strong, known as "Le Grand Ferré" (*Magnus Ferratus*). In spite of his huge size and strength Le Grand Ferré had a very poor opinion of himself, and the captain could do with him what he liked.

There were about two hundred of them, all labourers and accustomed to gain a scanty livelihood with their hands. The English, who occupied a strong position near Creil, on learning of these preparations for defence, were filled with scorn for such wretched people. "Let us drive the villagers out," they said, "the place is good and strong and we will occupy it." And they prepared to do as they said. Two hundred English marched thither. Watch was not well kept; even the gates were open, and the enemy entered boisterously. At the noise they made those in the houses rushed to the windows, and seeing so many armed men were overcome by fright. The captain finally appeared with some of his men, and began to strike the English bravely, but was soon surrounded and mortally wounded. At this misfortune the others including Le Grand Ferré said among themselves, "Let us go down and sell our lives dearly, for we may expect no mercy." So they collected together and suddenly appearing from different directions threw themselves with redoubled blows upon the English; they struck as if threshing wheat on the barn floor. Arms were raised and lowered and at each blow an Englishman fell.

When Le Grand Ferré reached the side of his dying captain, his grief overcame him and he threw himself furiously upon the enemy. As he was head and soldiers above his companions they could see him wielding his axe, striking and redoubling his blows, none of which missed a victim. Helmets were broken, skulls split, and arms cut off. In a short time there was a clear space around him, for he had killed eighteen and wounded many more. His encouraged comrades did marvels, and the English quit the affair and took to flight. Some jumped into the moat and were drowned, others flung themselves against the gates; but blows rained upon them thick and fast. Le Grand Ferré, reaching the middle of the street where the enemy had planted its standard, killed the bearer, and seizing the flag told one of his own men to go and throw it into the moat. The man however pointed with terror to the still thick mass of English. "Follow me," called out Le Grand Ferré, and seizing his great axe in both hands he struck right and left, till he made a path to the moat where the others threw the enemy's ensign into the mud. Le Grand Ferré stopped a moment for breath, but returned at once to what remained of the English. Only a very few of those who came to perform this deed escaped, thanks to God and Le Grand Ferré, who killed that day more than forty of them.

The English were very angry and disturbed to see so many of their brave soldiers perish at the hands of these peasants. The next day they returned in greater numbers, but the people of Longueil no longer feared them. They went forth to meet the enemy, Le Grand Ferré at their head. And when the enemy saw him and felt the weight of his arm and his iron axe, they wished they had never come that way. They could not get back so fast that many were not mortally wounded, killed, or taken prisoners, and among these were some men of high lineage. If the folk of Longueil had consented to ransom them as the nobles do among themselves, they would have been very rich. But they would not hear of this and killed their captives, saying that in this way the enemy would do no more harm.

In this last struggle the fighting was very hard and Le Grand Ferré became much exhausted. He drank quantities of cold water and was almost

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immediately seized with a fever. He managed to get back to the village to his cottage and went to bed, but keeping close to him his good axe, an iron axe so heavy that a man of ordinary strength could scarcely lift it from the ground with both hands. The English learned with joy that Le Grand Ferré was ill, and without giving him time to recover despatched twelve soldiers with orders to kill him. His wife saw them from afar and cried to him, "Oh, my poor Ferré, here come the English, what will you do?" He forgot his illness, and got up quietly. Taking his heavy axe he strode into his yard. When they entered, "Ah, brigands," he cried, "you come to take me in my bed, but you don't know me." He placed his back to the wall so as not to be surrounded, and swinging his axe brought his assailants face to face with death. Of the twelve he killed five and put the rest to flight. Le Grand Ferré returned to his bed, but he had again overheated himself in dealing so many blows and drank more cold water. The violence of the fever redoubled, and a few days later, having received the sacraments, he passed away. Le Grand Ferré was buried in the village cemetery. All his companions, the whole countryside in fact, mourned his loss; for with him alive the English would never have dared approach.[d]

One feels, in the wealth of detail into which the chronicler enters, the sympathy of the old monk for the poor peasants. In the depths of the monasteries were narrated their valiant deeds against the pillagers of churches; these are told much more frequently in village companies. The tales spread slowly but went far. Little by little the foundations of hatred for the foreigner were laid in the hearts of the people, and a love of country whose fiercest outburst is found in Joan of Arc.

THE TREATY OF BRETIGNY (1360 A.D.)

The dauphin was still more anxious to send the English home because "France was in its last throes, and for so little as its woes might last it might perish." A conference was opened at Bretigny, near Chartres, the 1st of May, 1360. The English negotiators demanded in the first place the whole crown of France; then they limited themselves to what had belonged to the Plantagenets; finally Edward III contented himself with the duchy of Aquitaine and all its dependencies (Gascony, Poitou, Saintonge, Aunis, Agénois, Périgord, the Limousin, Quercy, Rouergue, and Angoumois), ceded in independent sovereignty, and Calais with the counties of Ponthieu and Guines, also the viscounty of Montreuil. Thus ended the first period of the Hundred Years' War. The king's ransom was fixed at three million gold crowns;[1] in guarantee for which sum John had to leave in Edward's hands a certain number of hostages taken from the highest nobles and richest bourgeoisie of the land. Edward carried them with him across Normandy, which he harassed once more, in order to embark at Honfleur, the Havre of that day. The provinces promised to the king of England were given up, despite the protests against this pretended restitution by the great majority who said, with the inhabitants of La Rochelle, "We will acknowledge the English with our lips, but never with our hearts." For a whole year they refused to open their gates to the English.

At Abbeville things went still better. When the patriotic citizens saw in their streets the soldiers who for fifteen years had trampled France

[1 According to Leber,[m] the king's ransom would equal 247,500,000 modern francs; and he adds: "This sum, enormous as it is, cannot equal the total of the single ransoms that went out of the country during this reign."]

under foot, they were unable to restrain themselves; secret meetings were held; then a riot broke out which was quickly suppressed, but not before a rich citizen, Ringois, was captured. The English commandant used, however, moderation and offered Ringois his liberty on sole condition that he would take the oath of allegiance to Edward III. Ringois refused. They took him to Dover, threatening him this time with death if he were obstinate, but he persisted. They brought him even to the platform of the fortress and showed him the furthermost parapet with the sea beating furiously at its feet; if he said one word he would be saved. He still refused and the guard threw him off.

There still remained to find the money for the first payment of the ransom, and it was obtained by a shameful expedient. "The king of France," says Matteo Villani[g] the historian, "sold his flesh and blood." For 600,000 florins he bestowed his daughter Isabella, then only eleven years of age, on Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the son of the fiercest tyrant in Italy, who hunted men in the streets of his capital and threw them living into the flames. Thanks to this money the king left Calais on the 25th of October, 1360.

THE LAST YEARS OF KING JOHN (1360–1364 A.D.)

The 5th of December following we find an ordinance by which John announces, in spite of the great compassion he has for his people, the levy of a new tax on all merchandise sold or exported, on salt and on wine, in return for which he promises henceforth good and loyal justice to all, to put nothing but undebased coin into circulation, and to abolish the right of seizure and other abuses that fell so heavily upon the poor people. These promises did not deceive any more than the taxes profited them. What could be produced in a country ceaselessly ravaged by large forces and desolated by frequent appearances of the black death? It became necessary to fall back on other resources — loans, the revocation of all donations made by kings since Philip the Fair, and giving the Jews considerable privileges in matters of finance. With the money thus procured what did the king do? Did he use it to break up those bands of brigands, marauders, and *tard venues* that had just (1362) captured and killed the constable James de Bourbon at Brignais near Lyons? He made little journeys at great expense, travelling from town to town to take possession of the rich heritage of the Capetian house of Burgundy, which the death of Philip de Rouvre had recently placed in his hands. From there he journeyed down to Avignon where he spent six months in feasting, and planning a marriage with the famous queen Joanna of Naples. The pope, who had already been twice ransomed from the great companies, made John a proposition capable of appealing to his adventurous imagination — to form all these warrior bands into a crusade, which would rid France of them, and at the same time win glory for himself. It is not impossible that John would have embarked on this rash enterprise had he not learned that one of his sons, the duke of Anjou, had escaped from the English, by whom he was held in hostage. John felt for his son to do a thing like this was a slight on royal honour, and resolved to go himself to replace the fugitive. He thus escaped in a chivalrous manner from his embarrassing position and the sight of France's misery. A part of the winter was spent in London, "in great rejoicings and recreations," says Froissart,[g] "in dinners, suppers, and other fashions." These fêtes and great repasts killed him; he died in London, April 8th, 1364, at the age of forty-four.[l]

[1361–1364 A.D.]

Towards the end of 1361 the young duke Philip de Rouvre of Burgundy expired, leaving no issue; his marriage with the young heiress of Flanders not having been consummated. The duke possessed not only Burgundy, but Franche-Comté, Champagne, Artois, and Boulogne. An ancestor of Duke Philip had three daughters, to whom the succession now reverted. The eldest had been Marguerite, the unfortunate queen of Louis Hutin, whose daughter, married to the king of Navarre, had conveyed to the representative of that family the best right to the Burgundian succession. King John, descended from the second sister, would admit no right to the king of Navarre, nor yet to the count of Bar, descended from the third sister. He pleaded that he was nearer of kin than Charles of Navarre to the duke just deceased; and thus made use of the same claim to Burgundy that Edward III had done to France. John hastened to Dijon and installed himself there as duke, taking a solemn oath to respect all the privileges and rights of the duchy. Artois and Franche-Comté returned to the duchess-dowager of Flanders. John had no intention of uniting Burgundy to the crown, which he well knew would displease the Burgundians, accustomed from time immemorial to their native dukes and provincial independence. He therefore, in 1363, gave the duchy of Burgundy to his youngest son, Philip, who had been constantly by his side during the battle of Poitiers and his subsequent captivity. King John, indeed, assigned this reason for the gift. It was fully acquiesced in by John's successor; and thus was founded that brilliant house of the dukes of Burgundy of the second race, which reigned from the Schelde to the Alps, and overshadowed and endangered the monarchy of France itself.[1j]

CHARLES THE WISE (1364–1380 A.D.)

Charles V was seven-and-twenty when he began to reign, and if he had followed the example of his father, he would have played the part of feudal king and fighting cavalier, as that for which he was ordained. But the young monarch saw that France had need of other defenders than feudal kings and fighting cavaliers. It needed a clear eye and a steady hand — a man at the helm, not a gilt figure at the prow; for never was there a time when the vessel of the state seemed in such danger. There was a whole people to feed and satisfy — rebellious vassals to reclaim — an open foe to guard against — riotous bands in the very heart of the kingdom to be discomfited; and for all this he had an empty treasury, a discontented parliament, ambitious communes, and a disunited nobility. But the French heart of courage and chivalrous spirit of loyalty was still entire.

Charles was weak in body, and over him hung the sentence of death passed on him by the physicians in his youth. Charles the Bad, it was said, in return for his arrest at Rouen, had poisoned the dauphin's food.[2] The prince escaped destruction by the opening of a perpetual wound in his left arm. "Whenever the sore heals over," the doctors said, "the dauphin must die." This issue was probably only a sign of a feeble constitution, but it silenced the sneers of his enemies, who were not accustomed to see a king except in armour; it doubled the respect of the few discerning potentates of the time, who began to perceive that a cabinet might be quite as great

[1 This famous house consisted of but four dukes: Philip the Bold, 1363; John the Fearless, 1404; Philip the Good, 1419; and Charles the Bold (*le téméraire*), 1467–1477.]

[2 This story is related by Froissart *o*, but, as Martin *b* says, "the fact is more than doubtful." Charles' biographer, Christine de Pisan, *p* is unable to give the cause of the king's constitutional weakness.]

a scene of glory as a field of battle. Edward III said he was never so resisted in open fight, as by the calm, sagacious councillor who had never drawn a sword. Before the first year was over all men perceived that things were greatly changed. There were no tournaments at the Louvre — no feasts at the palace. The king lived like an anchorite, except on state occasions, when he outshone the magnificence of oriental princes ; and paid his men-at-arms their wages, and granted privileges to the trading towns, and did not increase a single tax ! People must have grown ashamed of sustaining the cause of Charles the Bad against so true a Frenchman and gracious a king as Charles the Wise ; yet the war continued.[n]



CHARLES V

Charles V at first made use of the help of his brothers, committing to their hands the provinces most remote from the centre, Languedoc to the duke of Anjou, and Burgundy to Philip the Bold. He himself attended only to the centre ; but he needed an arm — a sword. There was then hardly any military spirit except among the Bretons and the Gascons. The king attached to him a brave Breton of Dinan, the sieur Du Guesclin, whom he had himself seen at the siege of Melun, and who had been fighting for France for some years.[e]

Early Exploits of Bertrand du Guesclin

The childhood of Bertrand du Guesclin offers some striking peculiarities. His ugliness, his deformity, and his rough, wild bearing had won for him the dislike of his family ; the harsh treatment he endured only served to embitter his character. Armed with a stick, which he invariably carried, young Bertrand was a great trouble to his mother, and the terror of all the children in the neighbourhood. He could not be taught to read. "He knew nothing of letters," says a chronicle, "and no masters could ever be found from whom he was willing to learn ; but he always wanted to strike and beat them."

One fine day, being then about sixteen or seventeen years of age, Bertrand escaped from his father's house, which to his youthful ardour felt like a prison, and went off in triumph to Rennes to wrestle with a young Breton, already made proud by having overcome twelve adversaries ; and soon afterwards Rennes beheld him again victorious in a solemn tournament, and from that time everyone who knew him, even his parents, understood that Bertrand had a great future before him. The war between Charles of Blois and John de Montfort, the two claimants of the duchy of Brittany, afforded Bertrand a favourable opportunity for distinguishing himself ; he took the side of Charles of Blois, whose cause appeared to him more French than that of his rival, and the walls of Vannes, Fougeray, and Rennes were

[1359-1364 A.D.]

in turns witnesses of his extraordinary valour. Charles of Blois, to show his gratitude, presented him with the valuable domain of La Roche d'Airien or De Rien. In 1359 Bertrand compelled the duke of Lancaster to raise the siege of Dinan. His battle-cry was, "Notre Dame, Guesclin. Guesclin!" When in battle, this name rang in the ears of the English; it had the effect of a clap of thunder, and even the bravest trembled before such an enemy. The most careful and complete investigations have not enabled the learned to state the precise date when Bertrand entered the service of the king of France; it is not certain whether it was to King John or to the dauphin that he first offered the support of his valour. But at least we know that in 1361 he was already in the royal pay, and that he was in command of a company of men-at-arms and archers; this fact is proved by a discharge signed at Paris by Du Guesclin, and preserved amongst the registers of the court of exchequer.



BERTRAND DU GUESCLIN

Some authors say that the governorship of Pontorson was given to Du Guesclin as a mark of special favour. Whilst fighting for the glory of the lilies of France, the Breton warrior by no means forgot the interests of Charles of Blois, his natural sovereign; thus, after driving the English out of Normandy, he marched to the siege of Bécherel and routed De Montfort's troops. It must have been about this time that his marriage took place with Tiphaine or Thiéphaine Raguenel, a rich heiress who, if we are to believe the traditions of the fourteenth century, foretold future events. The date of this marriage is one of the points of uncertainty in the history of Bertrand.o

The new king's first care was to recover the mastery of the course of the Seine. Mantes and Meulan belonged to the king of Navarre; Boucicault and Du Guesclin got possession of them by an act of signal perfidy. The two towns had paid the penalty of all the mischief the Navarrese had done to the Parisians. The citizens had the satisfaction of seeing twenty-eight of them hanged in Paris.

The Navarrese, reinforced by English and Gascons under the captal De Buch, desired to avenge themselves, and do something to hinder the king from going to Rheims. Du Guesclin soon advanced with a considerable body of French, Bretons, and also Gascons. The captal retreated towards Évreux, and halted at Cocherel, on an eminence; but Du Guesclin had the address to deprive him of the advantage of the ground. He sounded a retreat and made a feint of running away. The captal could not hinder his Englishmen from descending to pursue; they were too proud to hearken to a Gascon general, though a great lord and of the house of Foix. He was, therefore, constrained to obey his soldiers and accompany

them into the plain. Thereupon Du Guesclin wheeled round. The Gascons whom he had with him appointed thirty of their number to carry off the captal from the midst of his men. The other Navarrese leaders were killed and the battle was won. Won on the 16th of May (1364), it was known at Rheims on the 18th, the coronation day — a fine omen for the new royalty. Charles V gave Du Guesclin such a reward as never king before him had bestowed: an establishment on the footing of a prince, the county of Longueville, the patrimony of the king of Navarre's brother. At the same time he beheaded the sire de Saquenville, one of the chief advisers of the Navarrese. He dealt no better with the French who were found in the ranks of the companies. Men began to bethink them that brigandage was a crime.

End of the Breton War: Battle of Auray (1364 A.D.)

The war in Brittany ended in the same year. The king of France lent Charles of Blois Du Guesclin and one thousand lances. The prince of Wales sent De Montfort John Chandos, — the only rival in Europe to the fame of Du Guesclin as general and knight, — two hundred lances, and as many archers; and with these were joined several English knights. Montfort and the English were posted on a height, like the prince of Wales at Poitiers. Charles of Blois did not care for that. That devout prince, who believed in miracles, and who himself performed them, had refused at the siege of Quimper to retreat before a flood. "If it is God's will," he said, "the tide will do us no harm." He made no more account of the mountain at Auray than of the flood at Quimper. Charles of Blois had the greater strength; many Bretons, even, of La Bretagne-Bretonnante joined him, out of hatred doubtless to the English. Du Guesclin disposed the army in an admirable manner. "Each man-at-arms," says Froissart,[9] "carried his lance straight before him, projecting five feet, and had a small, hard, and well-sharpened axe, with a small handle. And thus they advanced in most handsome array. They rode so close that you could not have thrown a tennis ball among them, but it would have fallen on the points of the lances." John Chandos gazed long on the French order of battle, "the which he praised mightily within himself." He could not conceal his sentiments, but said, "So help me God as it is true that there is here flower of chivalry, great sense, and good arrangement." Chandos had set apart a reserve to support each corps that wavered. It was not without difficulty he prevailed on one of his knights to remain in the rear and command that reserve; prayers, and almost tears were necessary to overcome the feudal prejudice that made the front rank be regarded as the only post of honour. Du Guesclin could not have effected the same thing in the other army.

The two adverse claimants fought at the head of their respective forces. The Bretons were weary of this war, and wished to see it ended by the death of the one or the other. Chandos' reserve gave him the advantage over Du Guesclin, who was unhorsed and taken prisoner. The whole brunt of the battle then fell on Charles of Blois; his banner was pulled down and himself slain. The greatest lords of Brittany obstinately held out, and were likewise slain (September 29th, 1364). When the English came, with great exultation, and showed De Montfort his enemy whom they had killed, the voice of French blood, or perhaps of kindred, awoke within him, and tears started from his eyes. A haircloth was found under the dead man's cuirass. His piety and his good qualities recurred to memory. He had recommenced the war only in deference to his wife, whose patrimony

Brittany was. This saint was also a man. He made verses and composed *lais* in the intervals between his battles. He had been a lover, too; a bastard of his was killed by his side, endeavouring to avenge him. De Montfort got possession of all the strongest places in the country in a few days. The children of Charles of Blois were prisoners in England. The king of France, who carried no passion into the trade of war, made terms with the victor, and induced the widow of Charles of Blois to content herself with the county of Penthièvre, the viscounty of Limoges, and an income of 10,000 livres. The king did wisely. The essential thing was to hinder Brittany from doing homage to the English sovereign. There was every probability that, sooner or later, it would become weary of the protégé of England.[e] Peace was concluded on these terms at Guérande in 1365, and Du Guesclin was restored to liberty.

Peace also was concluded with Charles of Navarre, who was glad to accept the city of Montpellier in exchange for the places he had lost upon the Seine, and a period of rest was promised to the distracted land.

Du Guesclin Leads the Free Companies into Castile (1366 A.D.)

But the rest was impossible with so many conflicting interests to arrange, and such a spirit of unrule diffused by the recent struggles. Charles the Wise looked back with fond regret to the time of the Crusades, and meditated an exportation of the thousands of armed men of all surrounding countries to the East. But the Brabanters, English, and Saxons were very well satisfied with their present position, and had no desire to distinguish themselves against the enemies of the faith, when they could live so comfortably on the fat of abbey-lands, and occasionally put a bishop to ransom at home. The example of Montferrat, who had saved the pope at Avignon by leading the free lances of the south against the wealth of Milan, occurred also to the anxious thoughts of the king; and just at the moment when he was in greatest distress, a circumstance occurred in Spain which gave him the wished-for opportunity. Pedro, known in general history as the Cruel, but recognised in Spanish annals as the Great Justiciar, had offended a great proportion of his subjects by his relentless executions and harsh behaviour. He had poisoned his wife, a princess of Bourbon, at the instigation of his favourite Maria de Padilla, and threatened death to the surviving natural children of his father. Of these, Don Henry of Trastamara was the most popular and the best; he fled to France, and implored the aid of Charles against the murderous husband and unpitying brother. Du Guesclin saw the opening. "Sir," he said, "the free lances are anxious for work, and will gather from all parts if I hoist my banner. Better neighbours will they be on the other side of the Pyrenees than on this."

Charles adopted the party of the banished brother, and preparations were instantly made. Du Guesclin himself had begun as a leader of free lances, and knew their ways. Thirty thousand of them joined him in an incredibly short space of time, and he marched southward down the Rhone. The pope was as much alarmed as his predecessor had been, and sent out to know the object of their approach to Avignon. Bertrand answered with a grim smile, "We are thirty thousand poor Christian pilgrims bound on a crusade against the Saracens of Granada, and we want the holy father's absolution, and also 200,000 livres." "Touching the absolution, my son," replied the nuncio, "you shall have it without fail; but with regard to the money, that is a different thing." "Sir," replied the knight, "there be many here who reck not

of absolution, but many who desire the money, for we make them prudent men in spite of themselves." Their prudence was rewarded with both the absolution and coin to the amount of 200,000 livres. They made a detour and Avignon was saved. When they reached Toulouse, the object of the expedition was for the first time declared to them. Plunder and battle was all they required, and a deluge of cruelty, courage, and destructiveness poured down on devoted Spain. Pedro was expelled from the throne, and fled to Portugal. Henry was crowned at Burgos with Du Guesclin at his side, and was joyously received in the other cities of Castile.

Both nations now seemed ready for repose, and the triumph of having restored an exile and created a king was added to the other glories of the French monarch. But the Black Prince held his court at Bordeaux. Shortly after his marriage, in 1361, he was created duke of Aquitaine and had been living in his dominions since 1363. Feasts and tournaments were celebrated according to the strictest rules of chivalry, and noble ladies listened to the songs of troubadours, and the picturesque narratives of Froissart, and the adventures of fabulous warriors, as their predecessors were said to have done in the days of Charlemagne and Arthur. Suddenly the dethroned and powerless Pedro threw himself at the feet of the master of the lists; and half the stories of kingdoms lost and won by the irresistible sword of a single champion immediately rushed to their minds. All the blood of knighthood was on fire at the insolence of a people who had rebelled against their anointed lord, and Edward of Wales, as became a knight and man of honour, vowed to restore his suppliant to the throne. Crécy was renewed over again in the great field of Navarrete in 1367. Du Guesclin himself fell into the enemy's hands, and all the work of the free lances was utterly undone. Pedro was king and justiciary in one, and let loose his royal vengeance on all the land. Murders, executions, confiscations threw the whole kingdom into despair, and the English bitterly repented of their interference in behalf of so unchivalrous, unpitying a tyrant. The dreadful heats of the south came to the support of Henry. The English died of fever and excess, and discipline became relaxed. The reinstated king declined to pay the stipulated rewards; mutiny broke out among the discontented conquerors; and in the scorching summer, and amid these disturbances, the health of the Black Prince began to fail.

Meantime, Charles the Wise endeared himself to his subjects by diminishing their burdens, by encouraging agriculture, and giving greater influence to the parliaments he convoked. The contrast was great and striking. Conquest in the field was of no avail against the steady advance of a popularity so justly founded and nobly sustained, as now grew on the vanquished side. The free lances, who had joined the prince, if not paid by the treasuries of Pedro, must be satisfied by the wealth of their employer. Edward returned to Bordeaux with barren laurels, and an empty exchequer. He laid fresh burdens on his unhappy subjects in Aquitaine, to pay for the expenses incurred in Castile, and when the population of that trampled province compared their position with that of their neighbours under the crown, dissatisfaction took a wider range, and they complained of their rulers, not only as oppressors, but as foreigners. The English, indeed, even when the languages were the same, never became acclimated in France, and now there was added the great distinction of a different tongue; for the Norman portion of the English people had now become so small that English at this time was declared to be the language of law, as it had long been of religion and commerce. Anglo-Saxon bowmen, who never spoke a word of French,

served in the ranks of the Black Prince, and, of course, offended the nations by their brutal contempt for everything they did not understand. The prince, therefore, in the midst of failing health and military disappointment, perceived that his countrymen were not the masters of the land he claimed, but were only forcibly encamped on it.

From England no help was to be had. The king was old, and had fallen into the hands of a designing favourite, Alice Perrers, and her accomplices, who ruled him at their will. And nothing was wanting to the French monarch in these favourable circumstances, but warriors who could carry his plans into effect. Du Guesclin was a prisoner at Bordeaux, and all the wiser spirits in the court advised the prince on no account to let so dangerous an enemy go. But Edward was made of penetrable stuff; and on one occasion when they were in familiar conversation, he said, if the captive could collect a hundred thousand francs, he should be set at large—a vast sum in those days; but the sight of Du Guesclin, sword in hand, and released from bondage, was worth forty times the amount to the French king. The money was sent at once, and Du Guesclin lost no time in showing his arm was as strong and his heart as brave as ever. A rapid incursion into Spain and the battle of Montiel (March 14th, 1369) established Henry of Trastamara once more upon the throne, and freed him from the rivalry of Pedro, by the death of that ferocious tyrant. He was stabbed to the heart by his infuriated brother, after a personal struggle which lasted a long time. Henry was now undisturbed, and attributed his prosperity to the favour of the French king. He put the Castilian navy at the service of France.



A French Knight, End of the Fourteenth Century

The Peace of Bretigny is Broken (1368–1369 A.D.)

Charles was not slow in seeing the advantage of his position. Strengthened by the gratitude of his new ally, and the general favour of all his subjects, he spoke in a tone of defiance and majesty to the English prince, which sounded strange in his ears within twelve years of the battle of Poitiers. He summoned the prince of Wales to appear before his court of peers, as one of the feudatories of the realm, to answer for high crimes and misdemeanours. Edward answered, with much submission, that he would not fail to obey the summons, but would bring sixty thousand men along with him—helmet on head and spear in rest. Charles knew too well that this was but a vain boast, for the warrior was now too feeble to ride, and advanced in the exorbitance of his claims. Edward of England took up the game of brag on behalf of his son, and retorted from Windsor by reasserting his claim to the French throne, and calling himself, in formal documents, king of England and France once more.

War was openly declared, and Charles summoned his states in Paris (May 9th, 1369). Never was meeting so unanimous and so sedately firm. Taxes were voted, forces were raised, and defiance was hurled against the English both in their island fastness and the lands they usurped in France. The court of peers, consulted in its turn, declared that King Edward and his, not having appeared in answer to these summons, the duchy of Aquitaine and other English holdings in France should be and were confiscated. Every village, in imitation of the enemy they had learned to fear, had butts for practice of the bow; games of manly exertion were encouraged; freedom was extended to the serfs, and the municipal towns were enriched with further privileges. Du Guesclin returned from the Spanish triumph, and visited the king. The feeling in favour of illustrious birth was then so strong that, though Charles had bestowed the highest commands on the Breton soldier, they were offices which gave him only a temporary superiority over the forces employed, and implied no permanent pre-eminence when peace should be restored. But on this occasion a stately assemblage was called. All the princes of the blood, nobles of highest rank, chancellors, judges, warriors, were assembled in the great hôtel St. Pol, and Charles gave his sword to Du Guesclin, and said: "Du Guesclin, take my sword, and use it against my enemies. Henceforth you are constable of France." This was the highest dignity a subject could hold, and Bertrand excused himself on account of his humble extraction; but Charles persisted, and the Montmorencys, and De Coucys, and Courtenays, and Bourbons, thought the sword could not be in better wielding, and did obeisance to Sir Bertrand du Guesclin, who was now the foremost man in all the land.[n]

The English Invasion (1369–1370 A.D.)

The English immediately landed at Calais, while the Black Prince prepared another attack upon the south. A French army marched to meet them, but refused to engage them and retreated as they advanced. The towns were well fortified, and none was taken; the expedition was confined to useless devastation of the surrounding country.

In 1370 they returned and the same programme was repeated. The order to refrain from combat was so rigorously observed that at Noyon, when one of the enemy's cavalry climbed the ramparts crying out: "My lords, I have come to call on you; since you do not condescend to come out of your shell, I will come in!" he was allowed to depart safe and sound. Before Rheims, before Paris, the English encountered the same stolidity. From his refuge at St. Pol, where he had shut himself up, the king could watch the burning of the villages. But the brave Clisson himself exclaimed:

"Sire, you have no need to pit your own men against these furies; let them wear themselves out. They will not deprive you of your heritage with all these rubbish-heaps."

"Never was a king of France less given to war," said Edward III; "never was one who kept me so busy!" Charles V, in fact, feeble and ailing, never held a lance; he was vastly more fond of books. He had the most valuable library of the day, 910 volumes carefully guarded behind iron bars in a tower of the Louvre. He read the Bible through once every year. He corresponded with the pope and sent him presents; and again, to quote Froissart,[g] "my lord the king piously marched barefoot in the procession, and madame the queen also." So good a friend of the pope, so pious a

sovereign, merited the alliance of every bishop of the realm; and in fact the majority opened to him the gates of their capitals; even those upon whom the English most depended, as the bishop of Limoges, comrade of the prince of Wales, turned French.

This last act of treachery exasperated the English. The Black Prince swore by the soul of his father that he would enter into no other undertaking until he had made Limoges and the other traitors pay dearly for their treason. Having arrived before the city, he had part of the wall torn down, and his soldiers plunged through the breach into the streets. The prince had himself carried in in his litter.

"That was a sad scene," writes Froissart,[g] "where men, women, and children flung themselves at his feet, crying, 'Mercy, gentle prince!' But he was too inflamed with excitement to attend. Their pleading went unheard, and all were put to the sword. Never a heart so hard but would have wept to have stood in that city of Limoges and witnessed so great slaughter; more than three thousand men, women, and children lost their heads that day. And may God receive their souls, for martyrs they truly were."

The English grew somewhat calmer at last through their interest in a new spectacle: three French cavaliers, with backs to an old wall, contended as if in the lists against the duke of Lancaster and the earls of Cambridge and Pembroke. The prince of Wales stopped his chariot near by, the better to look on; and he allowed the three cavaliers to be recommended to mercy. The bishop, the principal author of the treason, he also spared. This unfortunate exploit was the Black Prince's last adventure; he languished for a few years, and returned to die in England (1376).

The English possessed an excellent infantry, archers whose darts pierced the best-made cuirasses, and men-at-arms almost worth a regular cavalry by their remarkable discipline and their habituation to concerted movement. To these Charles could oppose only an immense throng of nobles who, though they might be very brave, were also totally undisciplined. The part of wisdom, therefore, was to avoid encounter with large bodies; but in the intervals between expeditions he allowed his men to indulge in skirmishes. Thus Du Guesclin fought at Pont-Valain with Robert Knolles, a redoubtable English partisan (1370), and another corps near Chizey in Poitou (1373). Chandos had been killed during the first campaign. Another leader of great renown, the captal De Buch, was taken in 1372, near Soubise. The French were not always beaten back.

Meanwhile the king had his own battles to fight, and his victories are inscribed intact in the *Recueil des Ordonnances*. Under date of 1370 we read: "February, 1370, letters according the inhabitants of Rodez the right to trade with the entire kingdom free of duty on imports. — March, 1370, letters to the effect that the inhabitants of Figeac, now on land declaring allegiance to Edward, son of the king of England, will not have their goods confiscated if they return to French soil; ordinance setting forth privileges accorded the city of Montauban. — April, 1370, ordinance setting forth privileges accorded the city of Verfeil. — May, 1370, letters exempting the city of Milhaud from imposts during twenty years, and ordinance of privileges accorded the city of Tulle. — June, 1370, ordinance containing privileges accorded the inhabitants of the county of Tartas, the cities of Dorat and Puy-Mirol. — July, 1370, ordinances containing privileges accorded the cities of Cahors, Castres, Puy-la-Roque, Sarlat, Montégrier, and Salvetat."

These were Charles V's implements of war. Among those cities whose doors the royal ordinances failed to open prowled his captains with their

stratagems of war, cajoling and negotiating. Du Guesclin treated in secret with the inhabitants of Poitiers, who like those of many other towns had remained French at heart, and they allowed him to enter with three hundred lances within their walls (1372). Charles at once granted titles to all those who afterwards exercised the functions of mayor or alderman in that city.

Philip Mansel with one hundred English held La Rochelle. One day while dining with the mayor, John Caudourier, he received a letter from the king of England. The governor, recognising the royal seal, but being in his quality of gentleman unable to read, requested his host to read it for him. The mayor read out a message composed by himself to the effect that on the following day, August 15th, 1372, the citizens and the garrison should pass in review before the square. As soon as Mansel had drawn his men from the château, a troop placed in ambush by the mayor occupied the citadel. Du Guesclin was there with two hundred lances, ready to take possession in the name of France. Some weeks previously the Castilian fleet had destroyed an English fleet before La Rochelle.

Nevertheless the confident enemy tried again in 1373. Landing at Calais with thirty thousand men, the duke of Lancaster set forth to conquer France: he only crossed it. The journey was prosperous as long as it lay through the rich provinces of the north; but in the poor and meagre central districts deprivation and illness were encountered. At Auvergne not a horse remained; at Bordeaux only six thousand men were left: the cavaliers as well as foot soldiers had to beg their bread from door to door.

The English, disgusted with such warfare, remained away the following year; and the year after that they demanded a truce, which lasted up to the death of Edward III in 1377. Charles then broke the truce and struck a blow. He fitted out five armies and conquered all Guienne, while a Castilian fleet manned by French troops ravaged the English counties of Kent and Sussex. In 1380 there remained to the enemy only five French towns — Bayonne, Bordeaux, Brest, Cherbourg, and Calais. At the same time Charles the Bad was overwhelmed and saved his Pyrenean kingdom only by the ceding of twenty places as a pledge of peace (1379).

LAST YEARS OF CHARLES V AND OF DU GUESCLIN

The king of France attempted in Brittany what had served him so well in Guienne. June 20th, 1378, he summoned the duke John IV to appear before the court of nobles; the duke not appearing, his fief was declared forfeit to the crown. The Gascons gave themselves up to France. The Bretons would not hear of the alliance. Barons, knights, and esquires signed at Rennes, April 26th, 1379, an act of confederation that the citizens themselves subscribed.

John IV, although expelled from the country, was recalled. All the Bretons in the service of the king — and there was a great number of them — abandoned him; even those who had previously promised to second his projects turned against him. The old Du Guesclin sent him the constable's sword; and on March 1st, 1380, a treaty of alliance was signed at Westminster between England and Brittany. Again an English army landed at Calais under the earl of Buckingham, and again it journeyed with impunity across the north of France. It had not reached Brittany when Charles V died at Vincennes, September 16th, 1380.[1]

Many things had conduced to weaken the health of the too thoughtful king. Dissensions among his brothers renewed in Paris the scenes of false-

hood and partisanship which were going on in London. The influence he possessed over Europe as long as the pope resided in Avignon was taken from him, first by the removal of Gregory XI to Rome; and, in a short time after that, the usefulness of the papal chair in his schemes of advancement was altogether destroyed by the schism which broke out at the election of the next pope.

France accepted the Frenchman, Clement VII, who resided at Avignon as his predecessor had done; and half the rest of Christendom, including England, adhered to his Italian rival. This is the commencement of the great schism which afforded such vantage-ground, not only to the enemies of priestcraft but of Christianity itself. Charles felt the blow equally as Christian and king. While mourning this unhappy event, his grief was increased by the fall of the constable. Bertrand was besieging one of the strong castles in Auvergne which was rebellious against the royal authority and strengthened with an English garrison. The commander had agreed to surrender if not relieved within a certain time. Fever, pain, and anxiety laid Du Guesclin low; and when the appointed day came he was lying on his bier, and preparations were making to carry him to the grave. The governor, true to his word, hauled down the flag of independence, and marched out with all his men, head bare and sword drawn, and laid the keys of the fortress on the hero's coffin. So died the best soldier and truest gentleman of France. His last words to his comrades who bent over his couch were these: "Remember that whenever you are at war, the churchmen, the women, the children, and the poor are not your enemies." *n*

The modern editors of the works of the sieur Le Fevre give the following exaggerated estimate of Du Guesclin's merits:

"Bertrand was the man selected by providence as the instrument by which France was to be saved. Such a man deserved to take his place beside the kings among the tombs of St. Denis. He has been compared to Turenne; both brave and generous, they were like fathers to the men fighting under them; and when they were in want, Turenne sold his silver service for the benefit of his troops, as Bertrand sold his lands; there is some resemblance between these two characters, and the parallel might truthfully be carried further. But in reviewing the history of the Middle Ages, we find two heroes who much more strongly resemble Du Guesclin — Tancred and Richard Cœur de Lion. Examine carefully these three men, Tancred, Richard, and Du Guesclin, and you will find the same courage, the same boldness, the same rashness, the same contempt for danger, the same self-abnegation in victory; you will see three men who, on the battle-field, kill men as easily as an autumn wind blows down the leaves from the trees, and who, on their return to their tents, are as mild and docile as children; for them there is no intoxication in triumph, they show no pride in the hour of victory; their brows are humble, and you would think them unconscious of their own greatness. Bertrand du Guesclin swore 'by God who suffered on the cross and rose again the third day'; Tancred and Richard swore by the Holy Sepulchre, and trusting in the justice of their cause, the three knights would rush on the enemy with as much confidence as if God himself were speaking to them and urging them on. Does not the disinterestedness of Du Guesclin remind one of Tancred? How many knights were fed and paid by them — how many times they took off their own cloaks to conceal the poverty of some needy nobleman! Du Guesclin has all the characteristics of a hero of the Crusades; he would figure worthily in the Christian *Iliad* of the poet of Sorrento." *o*

The entire secret of Charles' success was reliance on his people ; and perhaps the most valuable portion of this reliance was in the fact that in the word "people" he included the whole population of France. This great word was not limited, in his interpretation of it, to the taxpaying inhabitants of the towns or free labourers on the farms. The very serfs on the soil were fellow-countrymen of the great successor of St. Louis. His laws had reference as often to the interests of the lowest of his subjects as to the rights of the richest cities. He was the first and the last to put arms into the hands of the whole nation. Each man had his bow and quiver of arrows, his short sword or iron-pointed staff. He was openly practised in the use of them, and was taught that it was dishonourable for a Frenchman to be unable to defend his wife and children with his own hands. The experiment was so successful against even such generals as Chandos and the Black Prince, that it might be expected to continue one of the standing institutions of the kingdom. But these feelings of self-respect were only useful against a foreign enemy, and might be dangerous against a domestic master. So, ere many years elapsed, the system was abolished ; the butts were destroyed, the bows and swords withdrawn, for fear the "small people" should find themselves too powerful ; and the result was — as we shall see — Henry V of England and the battle of Agincourt. It was not more in the formation of new establishments that Charles showed his wisdom than in the purification and improvement of the old. The legalism so strongly encouraged by Philip the Fair, as a preservative against the power of the nobles, had now become an oppression to the people. The civil servants of the crown absorbed a vast portion of the taxes they were employed to raise, and the paid offices about the provincial courts and local parliaments were innumerable. He diminished them both in number and amount of salary, and tried to save his subjects from the intricacies of technical pleadings, as almost an equal evil with the violence of lawless force. The only people, indeed, he could not bring within the rules of mercy and justice were the lords and gentlemen, who were the ornaments of chivalry and the strength of his armies. Feudalism, in fact, was dissolving, and chivalry, which was its poetic ideal, could not stand the trial of actual war. Knights were still mere gladiators — sometimes more for show than action ; and gentlemen, in our sense of the word, were not yet in existence.[n]



CHAPTER VII

THE BETRAYAL OF THE KINGDOM

[1380–1422 A.D.]

Fourteenth century France was the prey of Anarchy, of Civil War, of Foreign Invasion. When one considers the unhappy reigns of Philip of Valois and of John, the captivity of the king, the occupation of France by the English, the insanity of Charles VI, and the crimes of Isabella of Bavaria, one can explain why two centuries separated the literary epoch of France from that of Italy. — VILLEMAIN.[1]

CHARLES V was but forty-three years of age when he died. His death was a great misfortune for the country, for his eldest son was only twelve years old, and intrusted to the care of his three uncles, the dukes of Anjou, Burgundy, and Berri, grasping men, each solely preoccupied with one subject — the first with the kingdom of Naples where Queen Joanna had proclaimed him her successor, the second with the great fief of Flanders which he would in time inherit, the third with his pleasures and his wealth. The young king, who came to the throne as Charles VI, and who, owing to his tender years, was quite at the mercy of his relatives, had, on his mother's side, a fourth uncle, the duke de Bourbon, an excellent prince but wholly without influence ; and a brother, the duke of Orleans.

During the late king's last moments, his eldest brother, the duke of Anjou, who by virtue of his title would assume the regency, kept himself hidden in an adjacent chamber. Scarcely had Charles drawn his last breath than the duke seized the crown jewels, and by threatening the treasurer, Savoisy, with death, got hold of a number of gold and silver ingots which had been sealed up in the walls of the castle of Melun by masons who had immediately been got rid of. The year before, while governor of Languedoc, he had caused an insurrection by his rapacious acts, and in Montpellier alone condemned two hundred citizens to the stake, two hundred to the gallows, two hundred to the block, eighteen hundred to the loss of their property, and the rest of the town to a fine of 600,000 francs. The king modified these atrocious sentences and recalled the duke. Unfortunately the power of regency belonged to this prince. His brothers, like himself, filled their pockets ; Burgundy allotted himself the government of Normandy and Picardy ; Berri, who had already had Berri, Auvergne, and Poitou in

appanage, took Languedoc and Aquitaine. Thus a third of the realm became a field for his rapacity.

A new reign always brings a moment of hope. The abolition of certain taxes was demanded, and the duke promised to suppress all those which had been instituted since Philip the Fair. He might as well have promised to renounce the government of France; the regent did not know how to keep his word. One day a mounted crier appeared in the public square, and announced that the king's silver plate had been stolen, promising a large reward to whoever recovered it. When a crowd had gathered to discuss the news, he cried that the next day a new tax would be levied on all merchandise sold, and galloped away at full speed.

The next day, in truth, which was the first of March, 1382, tax-gatherers appeared in the market-place and demanded a tax on a bit of cress which had just been sold by an old woman. A furious riot at once broke out. The rebels rushed to the Hôtel-de-Ville and the arsenal, and armed themselves with new mallets that had been stored up there in view of an attack from the English. These *maillotins* were, for the moment, masters of the situation; then, as in all popular riots of this time, fury gave way to terror and discouragement. The princes, who took the matter in hand, executed in secret the most seditious and imposed on others the most ruinous fines, with the proceeds of which the duke of Anjou departed for Italy. But the new tax was withdrawn and the leaders of the riot were punished secretly. The Parisian rising had meantime spread to Rouen, Rheims, Châlons, Troyes, and Orleans, where it formed the nucleus of two other revolutionary movements — one in the north in Flanders, the other in the south in Languedoc.

The duke of Berri had scarcely appeared in his province of Languedoc when trouble broke out. The pope interfered and put an end to it, but the pope could not stop the executions and cruelties of the governing prince. The peasants despoiled of everything by the soldiers commenced a sort of *jacquerie* (peasant revolt). They took refuge in the mountains, especially on the slopes of the Cévennes and thence, organised into armed bands, rushed down upon the nobles and wealthy inhabitants, giving no quarter to those whose hands were not callous with toil. They were called the *tuchins*. Affairs in Flanders were still more serious.

WAR IN FLANDERS: BATTLE OF ROOSEBEKE (1382 A.D.)

The Flemings had rebelled, in the preceding reign, against their French count who amused himself with violating the municipal franchises of the country. Peter Dubois and Philip van Artevelde, son of the famous brewer, had led with success the insurrection of the "chaperons blancs" (white-caps), and at the battle of Bruges (May 3rd, 1382) had overturned the last hopes of Count Louis. Philip van Artevelde pushed the insurrection with the same boldness and in the same manner as his father. Plenipotentiaries from Ghent, Ypres, and Bruges were sent to Richard II of England, offering to recognise him as king of France if he would come to their aid. For a quarter of a century the breath of revolt had been blowing over the middle classes throughout Europe — the enterprise of Rienzi at Rome, Wat Tyler in England, then Étienne Marcel and now the "Jacques," the "maillotins," the "tuchins," and the "white-caps"! Insurrection, smothered in one place, broke out afresh in another, and it was to be feared, as Froissart[c] says, "that all nobility and refinement would be dead and lost in France as well as in many other countries."

[1382-1383 A.D.]

One day while the dukes of Burgundy and Berri were discussing together the dangers of the situation and the necessity for intervention in Flanders, and of striking at the roots of the spirit of revolt and liberty, the young king entered, with a hawk on his fist. "Well, my dear uncles," said he, "and what are you talking about in such solemn council?" "Ah, monseigneur," replied Berri, "here is my brother of Burgundy who complains of the people in Flanders where the wretches have turned their lord and nobles out of their heritage. They have a leader who calls himself Artevelde, a true Englishman for courage, who has besieged a crowd of nobles in Oudenarde, and swears he will never leave and will have his will with those in the town unless your power relieve them." "By my faith," rejoined the king, "I have a great desire to help them. For God's sake, let us go there. I want nothing more than to arm myself, for I have never yet been armed, and if I wish to reign with power and honour, must I not learn the use of arms?" And he was anxious to set out that day or the next.

A great army was soon ready. At its approach all the Flemish towns made submission and the people of Ghent had now no resource but to win a great battle by throwing themselves upon the enemy with the impetuosity of the boar, as they had done at Bruges and as they now tried to do at Roosebeke, November 27th, 1382. They were tied one to the other, so as to make it impossible to retreat, and advanced in a single battalion. This manœuvre had been successful at Bruges against a much smaller number. But this time the wings of the great French army folded upon them, and, assailed on its side, the battalion was helpless. The lances of the cavalry carried much farther than the short Flemish spears, and the latter could not reach the enemy which was attacking them. Disorder soon reigned supreme in the little cohort surrounded on all sides.

"The men-at-arms," says Froissart,[c] "knocked down the Flemings with all their might. They had well-sharpened battle-axes, with which they cut through helmets and disbrained heads; others gave such blows with leaden maces that nothing could withstand them. Scarcely were the Flemings overthrown when pillagers advanced, who, mixing with the men-at-arms, made use of the large knives they carried, and finished slaying whoever fell into their hands, without more mercy than if they had been so many dogs. There was a large and high mound of the Flemings who were slain; and never was there so little blood spilt at so great a battle where such numbers were killed." Twenty-six thousand dead remained upon the field and among them the whole battalion of Ghent, including Artevelde. Flanders was not laid low by this defeat, for Ghent held out for two years more. But the nobles had avenged the shame of their defeat at Courtrai; and to efface even the memory of it, on leaving the town which had lodged them for a fortnight but where they had found, hanging in the churches, the golden spurs of the knights killed in 1302, they gave it to the flames after ransacking it. On his own account the duke of Burgundy took down from the cathedral a magnificent clock with figures which he removed to Dijon and set up in the south transept of the church of Notre Dame. It is still there.

INSURRECTIONS IN PARIS AND ROUEN

The Paris riots, quite as much as the rising at Ghent, had been put down at Roosebeke. The Parisians realised that nothing more would be tolerated from them, but hoped nevertheless by showing their strength that nothing would be attempted. So they set out to meet the king to the number of

twenty thousand armed men, who drew up in line of battle beneath the heights of Montmartre. At this sight the nobles said to themselves: "Look at the fine rabble and its insolence. Why didn't they come with our army to serve the king in Flanders? They kept well out of it, and instead of ringing the bells to celebrate our victories, they dare to show themselves in arms before their lord."

Heralds came forward who asked the Parisians: "Where are your leaders? Which of you are captains?" The Parisians replied, "We have none other than the king and his nobles." The heralds then demanded whether the constable and four barons would be allowed to enter in safety. "Ah, you laugh at us," returned the Parisians; "go, tell them that we are ready to receive their commands." The constable then confronted them. "Well, men of Paris," he said, "who has made you come out thus from the city? You look as though you would fight your lord the king." "My lord," they replied, "we have no such wish and we never had; we only wish to show the king the power of his fair city of Paris. He is very young and does not know what we could do for him should he ever need us." "Well said," retorted the constable, "but the king for this once does not wish to see you thus. If you would that he enters your city, go back to your homes and lay aside your arms." They obeyed (1383).



CHARLES VI
(From an old French print)

The next day the king arrived. The gates were all wide open; but he wished to enter through a breach and had a section knocked out. Then he made his way through the streets, helmeted, lance in hand, with the most terrible air his young person could assume. Executions began at once; first those of the city's liberties. They took away its franchises, its elective magistrates, provost, aldermen, clerk, syndic, centurions, and tithingmen; they suppressed the people's masterships, corporations, and brotherhoods; they deprived them of their arms and of the chains that made the streets safe. Then followed executions of persons; they arrested, made summary investigation, and finished by killing. Three hundred of the richest bourgeoisie were drowned, hanged, or decapitated with scarcely a form of trial. Noteworthy were the deaths of Nicholas le Flamand, one of those who followed Étienne Marcel the day of the slaying of the two marshals, twenty-six years before, and of John Desmarets, *avocat-général* in the parliament, one of the negotiators of the Peace of Bretigny, and who was worn out in vain efforts between the two parties. His trial was iniquitous and his death touching. "When Desmarets," says the monk of St. Denis,[d] "arrived at the place of execution, 'Ask mercy of the king, Master John,' the people cried, 'that he may forgive your crimes.' The old man turned to them and replied, 'Loyally and well did I serve King Philip his great-grandfather, King John, and King Charles, his father; never had these kings anything to reproach me with; and this one would reproach me neither, had he the age and knowledge of a grown man. I do not believe him responsible in the

[1383–1388 A.D.]

least for this judgment. I have done nothing to ask mercy of him. It is God alone from whom I must ask it and I pray him to pardon my sins.'"

The bourgeoisie were brought together and read a long list of their misdeeds, with the punishments they deserved. At the moment when terror was at its height the two uncles of the king threw themselves at his feet and begged for pity. He let himself be influenced, and announced through his chancellor that he would change the punishments into fines. "This was," says Mézeray,[e] "the true reason for this *coup de théâtre!*" Paris did not get off on less than 400,000 francs, worth to-day about 20,000,000; at Rouen, Rheims, Troyes, Châlons, Orleans, Sens, in Auvergne and Languedoc, the same proceedings took place, especially the enormous fines. "And this all went," says Froissart,[c] "to the profit of the duke of Berri and the duke of Burgundy, for the young king was in their power!" This blow fell upon the bourgeoisie more disastrously than that of 1359, because the government was then in the hands of an intelligent man who checked the feudal reaction; in 1383 the princes gave themselves a free hand. The upper middle class was decimated and ruined; and when, after thirty years, public grievances caused them to essay another revolution, they were in no condition to assume its control and left it to violent men, who drenched Paris with blood.

In 1384 the count of Flanders died and the duke of Burgundy, his son-in-law, inherited his vast dominions. In 1369 Charles V, in order to facilitate the marriage of his brother the duke of Burgundy with the heiress of the county of Flanders, had abandoned French Flanders to him. But at the same time the king exacted an agreement from his brother, that the donation would be restored on the death of the latter's father-in-law, Louis de Mâle. But the count of Flanders survived the king, and Philip the Bold easily obtained from Charles VI the remission of his promise. Henceforth the house of Burgundy will turn all its affection towards these rich provinces, and as it finds means for aggrandisement in this direction at the expense of the petty German princes, it will forget little by little both the stock from which it came, and the France which began its greatness.

The following year was employed in immense preparations for an invasion of England. They collected, says Froissart, enough ships to make a bridge from Calais to Dover; there were fourteen hundred of them. They built a whole town of wood, which could be taken apart, piece by piece, in order to take an entrenched camp with them. But they let the proper moment for crossing over pass, and the project had to be given up, but not until enormous sums had been squandered. Another expedition against the duke of Gelderland who, for the price of a pension of £400 from England, bade defiance to the king of France, cost still more, and came to nothing (1388).

THE KING ASSUMES THE RULE (1388 A.D.)

The voice of public opinion was still very feeble, but it could be heard. On the return from the sad war in Germany, the king called a general council in the hall of the palace of the archbishop of Rheims, and demanded of those present, in virtue of the obedience they owed him, their advice on the conduct of public affairs. Peter de Montaigu, cardinal of Laon, took the floor, and praising the king's good qualities, exhorted him to begin the exercise of his absolute power by taking under his own control and direction the ministry of war and his own household, taking counsel from no one. Others supported the cardinal's advice; Charles declared himself determined

to follow it and thanked his uncles for the good offices they had rendered him. The king had scarcely left Rheims when the cardinal of Laon died by poison.

The former counsellors of Charles V, the "small fry," the *marmousets* as the great lords dubbed them in disdain, Olivier de Clisson, Bureau de la Rivière, Le Bègue de Vilaines, John de Novian, and John de Montaigu, reassumed, as ministers of state, the direction of affairs. The new administration was wise and economical, and stood for internal order and foreign peace, but through it the king only became the more prodigal; having no longer the pleasures and distractions of war, those of the fête and tourney became necessary to him, and these diversions now never ceased.[b]

Prodigious sums were needed for the "incomparable" fêtes in which Charles VI gloried, and which attracted to Paris the flower of the knights and noble ladies of all Christendom. This vast concourse of strangers, the stir, the joyful tumult, the dazzling shows intoxicated the young nobility and even the people of Paris; the Parisians had their share of the rain of gold and recovered in one way what was taken from them in another. In the first days of May, 1389, the most magnificent tournament which had ever been seen was held at St. Denis on the occasion of the knighting of the two sons of the late duke Louis of Anjou, the eldest of whom, Louis II, duke of Anjou and count of Provence, was preparing to set out to assert his claims to the kingdom of Naples against the heir of Charles of Durazzo. Charles VI had endeavoured to realise the most brilliant descriptions of the romances and to present to the feudal world a complete type of chivalric splendours. The ceremonial of initiation to the "holy order of chivalry," which had almost fallen into disuse since the adoption of the custom of conferring the order on the field of battle, was reproduced with scrupulous exactness.

In a neighbouring field the lists had been prepared, surrounded with wooden galleries for the ladies; and in the great court of the abbey a banquet hall had been constructed 192 feet long by 36 wide and hung throughout with tapestries of silk and gold. The first day of the tournament twenty-two knights in green and gold armour were conducted into the lists to the sound of music, by twenty-two fair ladies similarly attired and mounted on elegant palfreys; each gave her knight a ribbon of her own colours. The contests lasted all day; then the company proceeded from the enclosure to the festival hall and after the supper the ladies awarded the prize to the two who had done the best. The rest of the night was passed in dances and *caroles*[1] and in "pastimes" of a less innocent kind. The fête lasted three days and three nights — nights of orgy and delirium which rendered the venerable cloisters of St. Denis the witnesses of many voluptuous mysteries and which must have strangely scandalised the chaste shade of St. Louis in the depths of its tomb.

The jousts and balls were succeeded by a ceremony of a sterner character but equally sumptuous: the young king loved to vary his emotions and his shows. He had been seized with "a great love" for the memory of Bertrand du Guesclin, a feeling which was shared by the whole nation: although nine years had passed since the death of that great captain, and though Charles V had honoured him with a splendid funeral, Charles VI insisted on recelebrating the obsequies of Messire Bertrand in presence of all the French and foreign nobility whom the tournament had brought together.

[1 This old French word denoted either a song or a particular kind of dance.]

[1389 A.D.]

The fêtes of St. Denis had not satiated Charles VI; he remembered that the queen his wife had not yet been crowned: this was a fine occasion to indulge in fresh magnificences. He resolved to have Isabella anointed at Paris, and to compensate himself for the paucity of ceremonial which had been accorded to the queen's first entry into the capital. He notified his intention "to those of Paris," in order that they might be prepared, and charged the old queen, Blanche of Navarre, widow of Philip of Valois, to arrange the ceremony. Accordingly Blanche ordered the *Chronicles of St. Denis* to be examined for everything which they reported concerning the anointing of queens in olden times. Froissart[c] and the monk of St. Denis[d] have vied with one another in describing the queen's procession which arrived before St. Denis the 22nd of August, 1389, with all the princesses, some in painted and gilded litters, others on palfreys marvellously caparisoned. The king's uncles, who sought every opportunity to approach the supreme power, had presented themselves at court with their families; the dukes and all the great nobles escorted the litters which entered Paris to the sound of a thousand instruments and between two rows of horsemen clad, some in scarlet silk, others in green silk: they were on the one side the members of the king's household, on the other twelve hundred citizens of Paris led by the provost of the merchants. Across the whole of the rue St. Denis and the Grand Pont (the Pont au Change) were hung draperies of silk, camlet, and cendal (taffetas), which "shut out the sky"; all the houses were hung with silks and tapestries of a high warp and the windows were crowded with women adorned with dresses of brilliant materials and with gold necklaces. Fountains of milk and perfumed wine flowed at the street corners, and beautiful young girls offered the passers-by to drink from golden goblets. At the Porte St. Denis, at the *moûtier* (monastery) of the Trinity, at the second Porte St. Denis or Painters' Gate (Porte aux Peintres), at the church of St. Jacques de l'Hôpital, at the Grand Chatelet, platforms, wooden castles, and richly ornamented theatres had been erected; one represented God in his paradise and the starry heavens filled with angels who sang "very melodiously" and congratulated in rhyme "the lady enclosed amongst *fleurs-de-lis*"; another "showed" the king of France and his twelve peers, King Richard Cœur de Lion, and King Saladin with his Saracens. A rope had been stretched from one of the towers of Notre Dame to the Pont au Change: as the queen passed the bridge a man dressed as an angel, seated on this rope, descended from the towers of Notre Dame, passed through an opening in the awning which covered the bridge, placed "a beautiful wreath" on the queen's head, and "was drawn up again through the said opening as if he were returning to heaven."

The procession presented itself before Notre Dame, whence it returned to the Palais, and the next day the queen was anointed and crowned in the Sainte-Chapelle, by the archbishop of Rouen. The descriptions of the banquets which took place at the "marble table" in the great hall of the Palais, and of the jousts at the Hôtel St. Pol are to be found in Froissart.[c] The king had adopted a golden sun with rays as his device: he was one of the victors in the jousts. The rich presents of the city of Paris to the queen and the duchess of Touraine, the king's sister-in-law, contributed to pay for the gaiety of the court; the Parisians offered the princesses gold and silver plate to the value of sixty thousand crowns: they doubtless calculated on being repaid for this munificence by a large diminution of the taxes; but their expectation was cruelly deceived. The king left Paris a few days later, and as a farewell to his people left an increase of the gabelle and an

ordinance which prohibited, under pain of death, the use of silver coins of twelve and four deniers which had been in circulation since the reign of the late king.

HATRED OF THE NOBLES FOR THE MINISTRY (1389-1392 A.D.)

The ministry attempted to combat this state of affairs or at least to extenuate its disastrous effects. It economised in state expenditure to make up for the king's extravagance, and the state was the gainer by the arrangement.

The ministers gave Paris back its provost and conferred upon the bourgeoisie the right to acquire fiefs, as though they were nobles, and deprived the duke of Berri of his government in Languedoc, where four hundred thousand inhabitants had fled into Aragon. Not being able to inflict further punishment on Berri, they caused his treasurer Bétisac to be put to death. This Bétisac had merited the hate of all by his exactions. But they did not dare condemn him as an embezzler, since the duke of Berri had authorised all his acts and it was on the duke himself that the complaints of the people should have fallen. So they laid a trap for Bétisac, by advising him to declare heretical opinions, for which he would be summoned to ecclesiastical jurisdiction which would exculpate him. The accused man followed this advice and they burned him for a heretic instead of hanging him for a thief.



COSTUME IN THE REIGN OF CHARLES VI

The "small fry" ruled the kingdom for four years. Four years in which the king's uncles and the great nobles had to keep their hands off the management of affairs, and longed for an opportunity to get back into power. Finally an Angevin nobleman, Peter de Craon, mortal enemy of the leader of the marmousets, the constable Olivier de Clisson, placed his personal hatred at the service of the aristocracy's political resentment.

On June 13th, 1392, at the close of a fête given at the Hôtel St. Pol, the constable lingered a little to take leave of the king and the duke of Orleans, and then with eight attendants, two carrying torches, made his way towards the rue Ste. Catherine. Here Peter de Craon was waiting for him, with forty mounted brigands, scarcely a half dozen of whom knew what was expected of them. When Clisson appeared, Craon's men threw themselves on his attendants and extinguished their torches. Clisson at first thought it a joke of the duke of Orleans, whom he supposed to have followed him. "My lord," he said, "you are young, we must pardon you. These are the pranks of youth." But Peter de Craon cried, "Die, die, Clisson; here you shall die." "Who art thou," asked Clisson, "who speakest such words?" "I am Peter de Craon, your enemy. You have many times

[1392 A.D.]

provoked me, and shall here pay for it. Forward," he called to his men, "I have him whom I wanted and will have." The constable tried to defend himself but was soon wounded and thrown from his horse. In falling, his head came against the unlatched door of a bake-shop, which gave way. This saved him. The assassins thought him dead; they had, moreover, recognised the constable, and fearful of having attacked so powerful a personage, they fled with Craon to his castle of Sablé in Maine.

The news of the outrage was brought to the king as he was preparing for bed. He called his guard, had torches lighted and went to the bake-shop where Clisson was beginning to recover consciousness. "Constable," said the king, "how do you feel?" "Weak and poorly, sire." "And who brought you to this pass?" "Peter de Craon, sire, and his accomplices, treacherously and with no warning." "Constable, nothing will be paid more dearly or amends made for than this thing."

Peter de Craon, who no longer felt himself safe in the castle of Sablé, sought refuge with the duke of Burgundy, who, called upon to deliver up the rascal, caused him to be hid and replied that he knew nothing whatever of him. Charles immediately collected an army, swearing to take no rest until he had punished this rebellion. The dukes of Burgundy and Berri endeavoured to block this enterprise. Their hatred towards Clisson had grown since they learned he possessed great wealth. The constable, believing himself about to die, had made his will, and besides his fiefs and heritage he had disposed of 1,700,000 francs' worth of personal property. But the king paid no heed to the delays and bad will of his uncles and to the fears which his physicians expressed for his health. He led his army as far as Le Mans.

THE KING GOES MAD: THE PRINCES RETURN TO POWER (1392 A.D.)

It was the middle of summer, during the prolonged August heat. As the king was crossing the forest, a man dressed all in white seized his bridle and cried, "Stop, noble king, go no further, thou art betrayed." This sudden apparition startled the king greatly; a little farther on the page who carried the royal lance nodded in the saddle. The lance fell and struck a shield a resounding blow. At the sound of arms the king trembled, drew his sword and cried, "Quick, quick, upon the traitors!" He thrust his naked sword at his brother the duke of Orleans, who barely avoided it. One of his knights finally had to seize him from behind. They disarmed him. He no longer knew anyone.

The king was mad. Some said it was sorcery, but the king himself was to blame. Possessor at twelve years of age of that unlimited power which is often the undoing of the strongest characters, he was at twenty-four worn out with every pleasure and emotion in the range of human experience from debauch to battle-field. His constitution was ruined, his mind shaken; a violent shock had deranged everything.

When it was hinted that the king was the victim of poison or sorcery, "No," exclaimed the duke of Berri, "he is neither poisoned nor bewitched, except by bad advice." These words sealed the fate of the marmousets. A few days later Clisson demanded of the duke of Burgundy the pay of the knights who had accompanied the king on his last expedition. The duke looked him through and through, and said, "Clisson, you need not trouble yourself about the affairs of the kingdom, for without your help it will be well governed. It was an evil day for the realm when you first meddled with it. How the devil have you got so much money, that you

were recently able to will away 1,700,000 francs? Neither his majesty, my brother Berri, nor I with all our present power have been able to acquire so much. Leave my presence and let me never see you again, for were it not for my honour I would put your other eye out." Clisson hastened to the safety of his castle in Brittany, while parliament declared him guilty of extortion, and banished him from the country, imposing a fine of 100,000 silver marks. The sire de Montaigu, warned by this experience, sought refuge at Avignon. Bureau de la Rivière, the sire de Novian, and Le Bègue de Vilaines were arrested and imprisoned in the Château St. Antoine (the Bastille).

The king's uncles came again into full possession of the government: what would they do? They signed a twenty-eight years' truce with England in 1395 and gave King Richard II the infant princess Isabella, Charles VI's daughter, in marriage. But four years later (1399) the English deposed and afterwards, it is said, strangled their king, and this valuable alliance was broken.[b]

The signing of the truce of 1395 was a real assurance of peace in France, even in Brittany, where Clisson, banished to his fiefs, had armed his vassals at once and attacked John de Montfort. But the duke of Burgundy appeared in person at Ancenis, mediated between the two parties, and made them in January, 1395, sign a reciprocal promise to lay down their arms. Shortly after this John IV attended the meeting of Charles VI and Richard II at Guines (where the truce was arranged) and obtained from the English the restitution of Brest which had only been pledged to them.

With peace thus restored France was now able to occupy herself more particularly with the great questions then agitating all Europe: that of the papal schism of which all Christendom was longing for the end, and that of the crusade—or rather the barrier which it was felt must be raised against the conquests of the Ottoman Turks in the European provinces of the Greek empire.[c]

Forty years before the Ottoman Turks had crossed the Bosporus, taken Adrianople and a portion of the Danube valley. Now they were threatening Hungary. A crusade was therefore resolved upon, and put under the direction of a young man of twenty-four, John, count of Nevers, who later became the famous duke of Burgundy (John the Fearless). Young and old, equally short-sighted, gaily descended the Danube, taking the whole matter as a pleasure excursion. When they arrived at Nicopolis, King Sigismund of Hungary advised them to meet the advance troops of the enemy with his Hungarian foot-soldiers and light cavalry, and to reserve the knights for the real Ottoman army which would appear afterwards. But no one was willing to forego the honour of striking the first blow. So all opposed themselves to the advance-guard, threw themselves upon the first enemy who appeared, and arrived exhausted and in disorder at the top of a hill where they were received by the redoubtable janissaries which Amurat had just organised, and who made short work of the breathless, disordered troops. It was said that Bajazet put ten thousand captives[1] to death in his own presence, saving only from the massacre the count of Nevers and twenty-four nobles whom he ransomed (1396).[d] Consternation was universal throughout France, especially in Burgundy. Duke Philip strangely abused the obligations of feudalism which compelled vassals to ransom a captive lord or his son and raised as much from his vassals as from the royal treasury, more than double the 200,000 ducats which Bajazet demanded for the freedom of his captives.[e]

[1] Doubtless a wonted exaggeration.

[1396–1407 A.D.]

DOMESTIC TROUBLES AND SCANDALS

The government of the aristocracy was not fortunate: its acts were discrediting it abroad; its quarrels were weakening it at home.

Isabella of Bavaria was but fifteen years old when she came from Germany to wed Charles VI. Without parents, without a guide in the midst of a corrupted court, she learned its morals quicker than she learned its tongue, and she lived solely for luxury and pleasure. Years did not render her conduct more circumspect, or her thoughts more serious. From pleasure she descended to debauchery. Charged after the king's affliction with the keeping of his person, she used the authority obtained through the melancholy situation of her husband to satisfy her passions, her vices, and her vengeances. It will soon be seen how fatal this foreign queen was to France.

The duke of Burgundy, Philip the Bold, kept the sovereign authority until his death in 1404. His son, John the Fearless, wished to receive, with his heritage, his father's influence in the government, but the duke of Orleans, the king's brother, all powerful with the queen — master, through her, of the king and the dauphin; chief of the nobility, and brilliant knight himself — had no intention of renouncing the power to anyone. So there soon sprang up, between John the Fearless and Orleans, a rivalry that threatened to become civil war right in the midst of Paris. Each collected his arms and fortified his palace; they were about to fight when the aged duke of Berri interposed. He brought Burgundy to the bedside of Orleans who was lying ill and made the two men embrace and talk and take food together. This reconciliation took place November the 20th, 1407; on the 23rd Louis of Orleans fell, assassinated by John the Fearless.

For more than four months, the duke had been planning this murder. He had bought, in the city, a house for the ostensible purpose of storing wine, corn, and other provisions, but really concealed in it seventeen hired assassins. This house, situated in the rue Vieille du Temple, near the Porte Barbette, lay in the path of the duke of Orleans while returning from the king's residence to his own palace. Wednesday, the 23rd of November, at eight in the evening, the duke of Orleans left the Hôtel Montaigu on mule-back. The night was very dark, and he was accompanied only by two equerries mounted on one horse and four foot attendants carrying torches. Although it was not late, all the shops were closed. The duke, keeping a little behind his people, was singing softly to himself and toying with his glove when suddenly the assassins, concealed by the corner of a house, rushed upon him crying, "Die! Die!"

"I am the duke of Orleans," the duke shouted. "Then we want you," they replied, striking him. A page tried to cover the prince with his body and was killed. A woman who witnessed the affair from a window screamed murder. One of the assassins called to her, "Shut up, wretch." Then by the light of the torches she saw come out of the duke of Burgundy's recently bought house, a large man with a red hat over his eyes, who, with a lantern, looked to see that there had been no slip as in the case of the constable De Clisson. But this time the murderers had well earned their wage. The body was literally hacked to pieces; the right arm was cut in two, the severed left wrist was thrown to one side, the skull split from ear to ear, and the brains scattered on the pavement. At this the man in the red hat said to the others, "Put out your lights and let us go, he is dead." They put their torches back into the house they had occupied, strewed caltrops behind them to prevent pursuit, and retired to the Hôtel d'Artois in the rue Mauconseil.

The next day John the Fearless went, like all the princes, to see the corpse, and sprinkled it with holy water, at the church of the Blancs-Manteaux. "Never," he said, at sight of the dead, "has so foul a murder been committed in this realm." He wept at the funeral and held a corner of the pall. Some days later, however, when the provost of Paris announced in the council that he would make every effort to find the assassins if they would give him permission to search the palaces of the princes, John the Fearless became confused and grew pale. Then it was he drew aside the duke of Berri and the king of Sicily, "I did it," he whispered, "the devil tempted me." This state of mind soon passed, and the duke of Burgundy resolved to admit and justify his crime. In fact the next day he boldly appeared at the council of the princes, but his uncle Berri met him at the door and said, "My good nephew, don't come in this time. I don't want you here." The thought came to the guilty man that perhaps they were going to arrest him, and he fled at once to his possessions in Flanders. From there he proclaimed, preached, and wrote to the world that he had but forestalled an ambush of the duke of Orleans. A Franciscan monk, the learned John Petit, was the following year charged with the proof in twelve arguments, in honour of the twelve Apostles, that if the duke was killed it was for the glory of God, since he was a heretic; for the good of the king, since he wished to usurp the throne, and for the public welfare, since the state was rid of a tyrant.

To this strange apology for the murder, from the pen of a monk, Burgundy added a bloody victory.[b] An insurrection of the people of Liège against their bishop, a creature of the duke, called the latter from Paris. His influence had caused John, a younger brother of the house of Bavaria, to be elected bishop; John took deacon's orders to entitle him to assume the episcopal sovereignty, but he refused to be priested, preferring the helmet to the mitre. The Liègeois were discontented at having a profane knight in lieu of a bishop; they entreated and petitioned John to take upon him the sacerdotal character. He laughed at them. They rebelled and drove him out. Such was the crime of the Liègeois. The duke of Burgundy marched against them; a battle was fought at Hasbain, in which the burgesses of Liège were as unfortunate as those of Ghent had been at Roosebeke. It is said that twenty-six thousand dead were counted on the field of battle.[h]

This was the best argument in Burgundy's defence; he returned to Paris promising the people an immediate abolition of taxes, and extracted from the king a letter of forgiveness, in which Charles VI declared that he cherished no resentment towards the author of his brother's death (Peace of Chartres, March, 1409).

The duchess of Orleans, the beautiful and gentle Valentine Visconti, was at least spared this last shame. The death of her husband killed her. She had taken for her motto, "*Rien ne m'est plus; plus ne m'est rien*," and "died in 1408" [says Juvénal des Ursins[f]] "in anger and grief."

The duke of Orleans was not worth much regret. His administration had been as deplorable as his morals. He had declared war on England, and had not carried it out, and had used this pretext for an increase of taxes which he himself had appropriated. Burgundy had bitterly opposed this new burden, and to appease the people, and especially to lay his own hand on the rich spoil, he now sent the superintendent of finances to the scaffold (1408). Then he restored the Parisians their ancient free constitution, the rights to elect their provost and to organise a citizen militia under elective leaders, and even to hold noble fiefs with the privileges thereto attached. Besides this he was extremely popular, which state of affairs he increased by showing citizens,

[1408–1412 A.D.]

even the least important, such consideration as they had never before known. These were the market people who formed, in Paris, the strength of the Burgundian party. Feudalism never forgave John the Fearless for having sought such support, no more than it did for having compromised seignorial inviolability by slaying a prince of the blood, the king's brother. A considerable faction of the nobility turned against him. The avengers of Orleans ranged themselves under the banner of the father-in-law of one of his sons, the count d'Armagnac, who gave the party its name (1410). Thus, with the king mad, the queen ignored and incapable, the dauphin threatened by his excesses with his father's end, the first prince of the blood stained with an infamous murder, there was no government — only armed factions, and war at home and abroad. Such was the state of France; nothing but disaster could come of it.

CIVIL WAR

From 1410 to 1412 the two factions attacked each other twice, and twice came to a settlement (Peace of Bicêtre, November, 1410; Peace of Bourges, July, 1412). Both sides made advances to the English to win over the country's enemy.[b] The Gascon soldiers, preferring a plundering life in the midst of France to their own rude and poor homes, were constant to their banners. The duke of Burgundy, on the other hand, could not get his Flemings to quit their families and crafts for more than forty days; he was therefore obliged to call in the English. Henry IV sent a body of archers to his aid, with whom he drove his enemies from the the north of the capital (February, 1410). In May we find Henry in league with the Orleans party, who were to restore to the English, in recompense, all their ancient possessions in France. The emissary who bore this treaty was seized at Boulogne; its contents were made public, and great odium was in consequence excited against the Armagnacs. The hapless monarch, Charles, recovering for a moment from his frenzy, joined in this indignation; he called an army, displayed the oriflamme, and marched with the Burgundians to besiege Bourges. The campaign, as usual, ended without an action, in a kind of treaty. Both parties felt the thirst of pillage and of blood; both wanted the courage to decide their differences in a general combat. No period of history manifests such an utter want of talent; no prowess was shown except in tournaments; no statesmanship save in the planning of a murder. Although the passions of men possessed of power and means were excited to the utmost, yet not a decisive blow was struck in policy or in arms. The fortune of the struggling parties was left to events — to chance. Success and reverse, the former at least, if not both, unearned,



SHIELD USED IN THE FIRST PART OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

alternately ensued; conquerors and conquered pursued and fled, rolling like destructive waves over the necks of a prostrate and ruined people. Civil wars in general, destructive as they are of peace and prosperity, beget at least the virtue of courage; yet it was not so in France. The peasantry were crushed and trodden down; the nobles and knights feared to trust them with arms. The Bretons and the Gascons, natives of distant provinces, were the only foot-soldiers, the sole infantry of France at this time; and a handful of English sufficed in these quarrels to give the advantage to either party.[h]

In this condition of affairs there was much to recall the worst days of king John, and to better them the bourgeoisie took the initiative, parliament, as in 1356, holding back. The University of Paris was very proud of having recently accomplished the deposition of two anti-popes, the election of Alexander V, a former doctor of the Sorbonne, and the convocation of a general council for the consideration of reforms within the church; and the bourgeoisie thought it could pacify the state as it hoped to have pacified Christianity. It obtained from Charles VI, in one of his lucid moments, a decree ordering all the princes back to their provinces and forbidding them to leave. But in a few months the war recommenced. The Armagnacs committed a thousand atrocities, telling their victims to seek vengeance from the "poor mad king." The body of citizens asked, in the king's council, that the defence of Paris might be committed to a friend of Burgundy's, the count of Saint-Pol, and the latter, not very sure of the upper middle classes, wished to overcome them by means of the populace. He took refuge in the great and rich corporation of the butchers which he authorised to raise five hundred men for the municipal defence. The butchers armed their servants and all the men employed about the slaughter-houses. This violent mob, accustomed to the sight of blood and killing, and who made a slaughterer named Caboche their chief, let themselves be led for a time by their masters and the learned men of the University of Paris. Then Paris presented the most singular and terrible spectacle. One day the mob presented itself at the dauphin's palace, forced him to appear on a balcony and through their spokesman, the old surgeon, John de Troyes, made him listen to their demands. He must send away his evil companions; lead a more regular life in every way; and take care of his health, and of his soul. The butchers charged themselves with superintending this change of morals which would bring with it, according to their ideas, the reformation of the kingdom. They set a watch around the Hôtel St. Pol for the safety of the king and monseigneur the duke of Guienne, and if they heard the sound of instruments and dancing in the night they entered boldly to put a stop to it, and preserve decency and order. But these rough and violent natures were not always content with words. If they had compassion on "that good fellow, the dauphin," they broke out against those who were corrupting him and removed them violently from the palace and dragged them before the parliament for justice, even sometimes administering it on the way to those who had displeased them the most.

However, the able members of the party drew up, for the repression of abuses, the ordinance of 1413, known as the Cabochian ordinance, whose application would have been successful, if in making elections universal it had not made its administration impossible (May 25th). "But," says Augustin Thierry, "men were found to conceive that great reform charter, joint work of the citizens and the university, while none could be found to execute and maintain it. Wise men and those accustomed to affairs had at this time neither will power nor political energy. They kept themselves apart, and all action

rested upon fanatics and the unruly who precipitated, through their intolerable excesses, a reaction which brought about their fall and put a stop to all reform."

What the bourgeoisie respected, the mob outraged. It proscribed not only vice and immorality, but wealth, and mingled pillage and murder with its reforms; it disgraced finally those who had employed it and who, blushing at the association, now preferred the Armagnacs to the Cabochians. Called upon by all men of moderation the Armagnacs put a stop to the mob's excesses, but at the same time overthrew the reform measures of the bourgeoisie (September 5th, 1413). John the Fearless fled again to his Flemish provinces.[b] Charles VI marched in person against him at the head of the Armagnacs, besieged and took Soissons, of which the inhabitants of every age and sex were inhumanly massacred. Arras was next invested,[1] but the Armagnacs becoming disgusted at the tediousness of the siege, as the Burgundians had been the previous year at that of Bourges, an accommodation ensued, the duke of Burgundy making verbal submissions, and promising never to show himself in Paris again. (Treaty of Arras, September, 1414.)

HENRY V INVADES FRANCE — A FRENCH VIEW

Whilst France was thus occupied and torn by civil contests, Henry V had succeeded, in 1413, to the throne of England.[h] He now judged the time come to interfere in the French mêlée. He stood, moreover, in need of a foreign war to settle himself on the throne his father had usurped. Since the great campaigns of the preceding century, the idea of a war with France had ever been popular in England. Therefore, when Henry proposed a serious expedition, he obtained easily from parliament six thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers, with whom he debarked at Harfleur on the 14th of August, 1415. After a heroic defence which lasted a whole month, Harfleur, unsuccoured, was compelled to give up. But Henry V had lost fifteen thousand men (two thousand men-at-arms, thirteen thousand archers)—the half of his army. Too feeble now for any great undertaking, he resolved to march across country to Calais, and to throw the French knighthood a new and insolent defiance.

The English left Harfleur on the 8th of October, traversing the Pays de Caux, not without some resistance, although they took nothing but food and wine from the towns for fear of arousing the inhabitants. On the 13th they arrived at Abbeville intending to cross the Somme there, but they found the ford at Blanquetaque so well defended this time that they were obliged to ascend the stream as far as Amiens.

Near Nesle a peasant pointed out a ford that could be reached across a marsh. It was a difficult and dangerous passage; they would be lost if attacked. But the French army was still far away. Besides, the nobles would not have wished a combat in this swamp; they were seeking a fine battle in open field and to this end asked king Henry for a day and place for a fight. To which the Englishman replied that it was not necessary to name either day or place, since every day would find him on the field.

In spite of this answer, they feared, in the French army, that the enemy would escape; and to make sure they should not, the princes took up a position between the villages of Tramecourt and Agincourt [French Azincourt], where the English must necessarily pass, on a narrow plain, newly ploughed and all sodden with rain.[b]

[1 At the siege of Arras the harquebus was used for the first time.]

On Thursday, the 24th of October, the English having passed Blangy learned that the French were close at hand, and thought they were about to attack them. The men-at-arms dismounted from horseback, and all of them kneeling down, and lifting up their hands to heaven, prayed to God to take them into his keeping. Nothing, however, took place as yet, the constable not having reached the French army. The English proceeded to quarter themselves at Maisoncelle, still nearer to Agincourt. Henry V disencumbered himself of his prisoners, saying to them, "If your masters survive, you will present yourself again at Calais."

At last, they discovered the huge French army, its fires and its banners. There were, according to the estimate of the eye-witness, Lefebvre de St. Rémy,[j] fourteen thousand men-at-arms, in all perhaps fifty thousand men; thrice the number of the English. The latter had eleven or twelve thousand men remaining of the fifteen thousand that had marched from Harfleur, ten thousand of them at least being archers.

The Welshman, David Gam, the first who brought word to the king of the enemy's presence, being asked how many men the French might have, is said to have replied, "Enough to be killed, enough to be taken prisoners, enough to fly." An Englishman, Sir Walter Hungerford, could not forbear from observing that it would not have been amiss to have brought ten thousand more stout archers; there were as many in England who would have desired no better. But the king replied peremptorily, "Now in our Lord's name, I would not have one man more. The number we have is that which he has willed; these folks place their confidence in their multitude, and I in him who so often gave victory to Judas Maccabæus."

The English having still a night at their disposal, employed it usefully in making their preparations, and providing as well as possible for both body and soul. First, they rolled up the banners for fear of the rain, and took off and folded up the handsome coats of arms they had put on for the fight. Then in order to pass the cold October night in comfort, they opened their baggage and laid straw under them, which they procured from the neighbouring villages. The men-at-arms fitted the rivets of their armour, the archers applied fresh strings to their bows. They had for several days employed themselves in cutting and sharpening the stakes which they usually planted before them to stop the advance of cavalry. Amidst all their preparations for victory, these brave men did not forget their souls' weal, but set their accounts in order with God and their consciences. They confessed hastily, those at least whom the priests could attend, and all this was done without noise, in whispers. The king had commanded silence, under penalty of forfeiture of their horses for the gentlemen, and of loss of the right ear for those of lower degree.

It was otherwise on the French side, where the time was spent in making knights. In every direction there were great fires which showed everything to the enemy; a confused din of people shouting and calling to each other; a bustling mob of valets and pages. Many gentlemen passed the night on horseback in their heavy armour, no doubt to avoid soiling it in the deep mud, which with the cold rain chilled them to the bones.

MICHELET'S ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT (OCTOBER 25TH, 1415)

On the morning of St. Crispin and St. Crispinian's day, October 25th, 1415, the king of England heard three masses, bareheaded, but otherwise in full armour. "For it was his custom," says John de Vaurin,[k] "to hear three

[1415 A.D.]

masses each day, one after the other." He then put on a magnificent helmet with an imperial gold crown. He rode without spurs on a gray palfrey, and made his men advance over a field of green corn, where the ground was less spoiled by the rain, the whole army forming one body, with the few lances he had in the centre, flanked by bodies of archers. He then rode slowly along the line, speaking a few brief sentences: "You have a good cause; I am come but to demand my right. Remember that you belong to old England; that your kindred, your wives and children are awaiting you there; see that you return to them with good cheer. The kings of England have always fared well in France. Look to the honour of the crown; look to yourselves. The French say they will cut off three fingers from each archer's hand."

The ground was in so bad a condition that no one was disposed to attack. The king of England parleyed with the French, offering to renounce the



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE MARCH OF HENRY V AND THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT

(The dotted line indicates a doubtful part of the route.)

title of king of France, and to surrender back Harfleur, provided he were given Guienne, with some few convenient additions, Ponthieu, a daughter of the king, and 800,000 crowns. While this parleying between the two armies was going on the English archers were securing their stakes.

The two armies formed a strange mutual contrast. On the French side were three enormous squadrons, like so many forests of lances, following each other in lengthened file through the narrow plain; at their head the constable, the princes, the dukes of Orleans, Bar, and Alençon, the counts of Nevers, Eu, Richemont, and Vendôme, a multitude of lords, a dazzling iris of enamelled armour, escutcheons, banners, the horses fantastically disguised in steel and gold. The French, too, had archers, men of the commonalty; but where were they to be placed? Every post was numbered, and no one would give up his own; these men would have been a blot upon so noble an assemblage. There were cannon, but it does not appear that they were made use of; probably there was no place for them either.

The English army did not look handsome. The archers had no armour, often no shoes; for headpieces they had sorry caps of boiled leather, or even of willow with a crosspiece of iron; the axes and hatchets stuck in their belts gave them the appearance of carpenters. Many of these good workmen had taken off their breeches, in order to be at their ease and to work the better. It is a strange, incredible, and yet certain fact, that the French army really could not stir either to fight or to fly. The rear alone escaped.

At the decisive moment, when old Thomas of Erpingham, having drawn up the English army, threw his truncheon into the air, crying out, "Now strike!" and when the English had replied with a shout from ten thousand throats, the French army, to their great astonishment, still remained motionless. Horses and riders, all appeared enchanted, or dead in their steel cases. The fact was that the big war horses, loaded with their heavy riders and their steel caparisons, had sunk deep in the stiff soil, had become firmly fixed there, and only struggled out to advance slowly a few paces. Such is the acknowledgment of the English chroniclers; a modest acknowledgment, which does honour to their probity.

Lefebvre,[j] John de Vaurin,[k] and Walsingham[m] expressly say that the field was nothing but viscid mud. "The place was soft and cut up by the horses, so that it was with great difficulty they could drag their feet out of the ground. The French were so loaded with harness that they could not advance. They had long and very weighty coats of mail, hanging below the knees; below these they had leg harness, and above them plate harness, and, moreover, helmets of proof. They were so much crowded together that they could not lift their arms to strike an enemy, except some of them in the front."

Another historian of the English side, Titus Livy,[l] informs us that the French were drawn up thirty-two deep, whilst the English were ranged in but four ranks. This enormous depth of the French served no purpose; their thirty-two ranks consisted wholly, or almost so, of cavalry; the majority of whom, far from being able to act, did not even see the engagement; whereas every man of the English was efficient. Of the fifty thousand French, two or three thousand only could fight against the eleven thousand English, or at least might have done so if their horses could have extricated themselves from the mud.

To rouse those inert masses, the English archers discharged volleys of ten thousand arrows with extreme rapidity and pertinacity at their faces. The iron-clad horsemen stooped their heads, otherwise the arrows would have entered through their visors. Then, from the two wings of Tramecourt and Agincourt, two French squadrons began with much spurring to execute a clumsy charge, led by two excellent men-at-arms, Messire Clignet de Brabant and Messire William de Saveuse. The first squadron, advancing from Tramecourt, was unexpectedly taken in flank by a body of archers concealed in the woods; neither squadron reached the enemy.

Of twelve hundred men who began this charge, there remained not more than 120 when they came up with the English palisades. Most of them had fallen in the mud by the way, men and horses. Would to God that all had so fallen; but the others, whose horses were wounded, could no longer control the frantic animals, which rushed desperately back on the French ranks. The vanguard, far from being able to open and let them pass, was, as we have seen, so closely packed together that not a man could move. We may imagine the frightful accidents that took place in that dense mass, the horses wild with terror, backing and smothering each other, flinging off their riders, or crushing them under their armour as the iron masses clashed together. Then came the English to complete the havoc. Coming out from their line of stakes, and throwing down their bows and arrows, they advanced quite at their ease with axes, hatchets, heavy swords, and leaded clubs, to demolish that confused mountain of men and horses. In process of time they succeeded in clearing away the vanguard, and made their way, with the king at their head, to the second line of battle.

[1415 A.D.]

It was perhaps at this moment that eighteen French gentlemen made a dash at the king of England. They had made a vow, it was said, to die or bring down his crown; one of them struck off a point from it; all perished in the attempt. This *on dit* is not enough for the historians, who further adorn the tale, and convert it into a Homeric scene, in which the king fights over the body of his wounded brother, like Achilles over that of Patroclus. Then it is the duke of Alençon, commander of the French army, who kills the duke of York and cleaves the king's crown. Being speedily surrounded, he yields; Henry holds out his hand to him; but he was already slain.[1] What is more certain is that the duke of Brabant arrived in haste at the second stage of the engagement. He was the duke of Burgundy's own brother, and seems to have sought the field to clear the honour of his family. He arrived very late, but time enough to die. The brave prince had left all his men behind him, and had not even put on his coat of arms: instead of which he took his banner, made a hole in it, passed his head through it, and charged the English, who slew him instantly.

There remained but the rearguard, which soon dispersed. A great number of cavaliers, dismounted, but raised up again by their servants, had made their way out of the throng of battle and surrendered to the English. At this moment, word was brought the king that a French corps was pillaging his baggage; and at the same time he saw some Bretons or Gascons in the French rear, that seemed about to return to the charge against him. He was alarmed for the moment, especially as he saw his men embarrassed with so many prisoners, and instantly ordered every man to kill his captive. Not one obeyed; those soldiers without shoes or breeches, who held the greatest lords of France in their hands, and thought they had made their fortunes, were now ordered to ruin themselves. As they refused to comply, the king appointed two hundred men to act as executioners. "It was a sad spectacle," says Lefebvre,[j] "to see those poor disarmed wretches, who had just received promise of quarter, slaughtered in cold blood, cut and hewed, head and face!" The alarm was groundless. It was only some pillagers of the neighbourhood, people of Agincourt, who, in spite of their master, the duke of Burgundy, had taken advantage of the opportunity. The battle being ended, the archers made haste to strip the slain, whilst they were yet warm. Many were dragged forth alive from beneath the corpses; among others, the duke of Orleans. Next day the victor, on his departure, killed, or made prisoners, all that remained alive.[2] "It was a piteous sight to see the great nobles who had there been slain, and who were already stark naked, like those who were born of men of no account." An English priest was not less affected by the spectacle. "If this sight," he says, "excited pity and compunction in us, who were strangers, and but passed through the country, how great was the sorrow for the native inhabitants. Oh, may the French nation come to peace and union with the English, and depart from its iniquities and its evil ways!" Sternness then prevails over compassion, and he subjoins: "Meanwhile, let his grief be turned upon his head."

The English lost 1,600 men; the French 10,000, almost all gentlemen,

[1] This embellishment is of Monstrelet's[n] contrivance. He places it apart from the account of the battle after the long list of the killed. Lefebvre, an eye-witness, could not make up his mind to copy Monstrelet in this place.

[2] Lefebvre[j] and Monstrelet[n] are the authorities for this statement. De Barante[o] says without naming his source, "Henry V put a stop to the carnage and caused the wounded to receive relief." [Tyler,[s] after reviewing the evidence, declares that "Henry did not stain his victory by any act of cruelty. His character comes out of the investigation untarnished by a suspicion of his having wantonly shed the blood of a single fellow-creature."]

120 lords having banners. The list fills six large pages in Monstrelet, beginning with seven princes (Brabant, Nevers, D'Albret, Alençon, the three De Bar); then come lords without number, Dampierre, Vaudemont, Marle, Roussy, Salm, Dammartin, etc., the bailiffs of Vermandois, Mâcon, Sens, Senlis, Caen, and Meaux, and Montaigu, the brave archbishop of Sens, who fought like a lion.[1]

The duke of Burgundy's son bestowed the charity of a grave on all the dead that lay naked on the field of battle. Twenty-five square rods of ground were measured out, and in that huge pit were laid all the bodies that had not been carried away, fifty-eight hundred men by the tale. The ground was consecrated, and a thick thorn hedge was planted round it, for fear of the wolves. There were but fifteen hundred prisoners, including the dukes of Orleans and Bourbon, the counts d'Eu, de Vendôme, and de Richelieu, the marshal de Boucicaut, Messire James d'Harcourt, Messire John de Craon, etc.*p*

MASSACRE OF THE ARMAGNACS IN PARIS (1418 A.D.)

With this rich capture, Henry hastened to re-embark at Calais. His army, reduced to ten thousand men, was unable to consider any further enterprise. The duke of Burgundy had taken no part whatever in the battle of Agincourt;[2] it was his enemies that brought about that shameful defeat. If he had made haste, he might have entered Paris as its master. D'Armagnac, the new constable and successor of D'Albret, showed more promptitude; he took possession of the capital, of the king and the dauphin his son, who was still a minor; that is to say, of the entire government. To recall a little popularity to the side of the party he showed a praiseworthy activity, borrowing ships from the Genoese, raising troops in France, and besieging Harfleur (1416). But funds were lacking and he fell back on the great resource of the times, debasement of money and false loans.

John the Fearless was always the patron of the poor. Paris murmured, and John the Fearless, to increase the fermentation, prevented the arrival of provisions in the city. He succeeded in carrying off Queen Isabella from Tours and having her declared regent. He forbade the cities, in his name, to pay the taxes imposed by D'Armagnac, and he entered into negotiations with the English (1417).

The latter had now returned. Henry V had taken Caen (1417), and like a conqueror who is sure of himself had divided his army into four divisions, the more quickly to accomplish his purpose. What, in fact, did he have to fear? The dukes of Brittany, Anjou, and Burgundy had signed treaties of neutrality with him. D'Armagnac could do nothing, for he was reduced to "borrowing from the saints," in melting their shrines, with the people of his party fast abandoning him because they were not paid enough; it was necessary to protect Paris with the Parisians who hated and betrayed him.

One Perrinet Leclerc, iron merchant on the Petit Pont, had charge of the small gate at St. Germain. "His son," says Monstrelet, "and some reckless young companions, who formerly had been punished for their esca-

[1 For other views of the battle of Agincourt see our history of England.]

[2 But neither for that matter had, in person, the count d'Armagnac. The princes had refused the aid of any civic corps, and as Burgundy could command but the town folk of Flanders and Picardy, his offers of help were rejected. The responsibility of the battle lay therefore entirely with the Armagnacs; but, as Crowe *h* says, "to the honour of the Burgundian party, more of its princes, than of the Armagnacs, fell on the field of Agincourt."]

[1418 A.D.]

pades," plotted to deliver the city over to the Burgundians. On the night of May 29th, 1418, Perrinet entered his father's chamber while the old man slept and stole the keys from under the pillow. The sire de l'Isle-Adam, informed in advance, was on the other side of the moat. He entered with eight hundred men, and the former partisans of the faction, the butchers, the slaughterers — all the people of the market flocked around him. Some Armagnacs tried to escape, taking the dauphin with them; but the greater part including the constable were thrown into prison, where their lives were soon in peril. The mob, which in 1413 had made its first appearance, reappeared on the scene in 1418 exasperated and furious with misery and uneasiness. Provisions failed and Paris was threatened with famine at the same time that ugly rumours circulated in the crowd; the Armagnacs were coming to assail such a gate, such a faubourg; the English, another. The cause of these misfortunes, they cried on every side, were those Armagnacs they had in their keeping. Vengeance must be had upon them and an end put to their schemes.



A French Crossbow-man, Beginning of Fifteenth Century

Sunday the 12th of June, 1418, the mob got under way and rushed to the prisons, Hôtel-de-Ville, Temple, St. Éloi, St. Magloire, St. Martin, and the Grand and Petit Châtelet, to murder indiscriminately everyone they found there. Armagnacs or not, by Monday morning sixteen hundred people had perished, killed in the prisons and streets. Their bodies were left there and "bad children played with them and dragged them about." With that of the constable they amused themselves by raising a large strip of skin "to represent the white scarf of Armagnac."

THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY MASTER OF PARIS (1418 A.D.)

These dreadful occurrences had just taken place when John the Fearless returned with the queen to Paris, amidst the enthusiastic acclaims of the crowd, who believed he brought peace and abundance with him. Vain hope! Neither one nor the other was to come from the duke of Burgundy, but on the contrary to all preceding misfortunes there was added an epidemic which carried off in Paris and its environs fifty thousand persons. Again the fury of the mob became uncontrollable and wrought its vengeance on the wretched beings that had been overlooked in the prisons or sent there since June. The 31st of August an immense assemblage formed itself under the orders of the hangman Capeluche, and set out for the prisons. The duke of Burgundy hastened after them imploringly, and even went so far as to press the hand of Capeluche, but in vain. A new massacre took place. Some days after the duke sent the bloodthirsty mob after some Armagnacs, shut up, as

he said, in Montlhéry, and as soon as they were gone he shut the gates of Paris behind them and had Capeluche beheaded.[b]

In becoming master of Paris, the duke of Burgundy had succeeded to all the embarrassments of the constable D'Armagnac. He had now in his turn to rule the great city, victual and maintain it, which could only be done by keeping the Armagnacs and the English at a distance — that is to say, by making war, re-establishing the taxes he had suppressed, and losing his popularity.

The equivocal part he had so long played, accusing others of treachery, while he himself was betraying his country, was now to come to a close. As the English were ascending the Seine and menacing Paris, he had no alternative but to forego his hold on the capital, or to give them battle. But by his eternal tergiversation and duplicity, he had enervated his own party, and was now powerless alike for peace or war.

The people of Rouen and Paris, who had chosen him for their leader, were Burgundians, indeed, and foes to the Armagnacs, but still more foes to the English. They were astonished, in their simplicity, to see that their good duke did nothing against the enemy of the kingdom. His warmest partisans began to say, as the Bourgeois de Paris[q] relates, that "he was, in all his proceedings, the slowest man that could be found." The Armagnacs possessed the whole centre, Sens, Moret, Crécy, Compiègne, Montlhéry, a girdle of towns round Paris, Meaux, and Melun; that is to say, Marne and Haute Seine. The duke sent to Rouen all the forces he could spare without leaving Paris unprotected, namely, four thousand horse.

It had long been foreseen that Rouen would be invested. Henry V had approached it with extreme slowness. Not content with having two great English colonies in his rear, Harfleur and Caen, he had completed the conquest of lower Normandy by the capture of Falaise, Vire, St. Lô, Constance, and Évreux. He kept possession of the Seine, not only by Harfleur, but also by Pont de l'Arche. He had already re-established some degree of order, reassured the clergy, and invited the absentees to return, promising them support in case of their compliance, and declaring that otherwise he would dispose of their lands or their benefices. He reopened the exchequer and the other tribunals, and appointed his grand treasurer of Normandy supreme president over them. He reduced the tax on salt to almost nothing, "in honour," says Rymer,[r] "of the Holy Virgin."

SIEGE OF ROUEN (1418–1419 A.D.)

There were in Rouen fifteen thousand foot-soldiers and four thousand horse, in all, perhaps, sixty thousand souls — a whole people to feed. Henry, knowing he had nothing to fear, either from the dispersed Armagnacs, or from the duke of Burgundy, who had just besought of him another truce for Flanders, did not hesitate to divide his army into eight or nine bodies, so as to embrace the vast compass of Rouen. These bodies communicated with each other by means of trenches, which protected them from shot; whilst in the direction of the open country they were defended from a surprise by deep ditches set with thorns. He was prepared for an obstinate resistance, but his anticipation was surpassed. There was a strong Cabochian leaven in Rouen. Alain Blanchard, the chief of the arblast men, and the other Rouennese leaders, seem to have been connected with the Carmelite Pavilly, the Parisian orator of 1413. The Pavilly of Rouen was the canon Delivet. These men defended Rouen for seven months.

[1418-1419 A.D.]

The king of England, thinking to terrify the inhabitants, had gibbets erected all round the town, and hanged the prisoners on them. He barred the Seine, too, with a wooden bridge, chains, and barges, so that nothing could pass. The Rouennese seemed reduced to extremities at an early period of the siege, and yet they held out six months longer; it was a miracle. They ate up the horses, dogs, and cats. When these were gone, those who could anywhere find a morsel of food, however filthy, took good care not to let it be seen; a thousand greedy wretches would otherwise have seized upon it. The most horrible necessity that befell the town was that of expelling all who could not fight, twelve thousand old men, women, and children. The piteous crowd presented themselves before the English intrenchments, and were received at the sword's point. Repulsed alike by their friends and their enemies, they remained between the camp and the town, in the ditch, without any other food than the weeds they plucked. There they passed the whole winter, with nothing between them and the sky.

Meanwhile, the duke of Burgundy was beginning to put himself in motion. First, he went to Paris from St. Denis, where he made the king go through the solemn mockery of displaying the oriflamme, to remain a long while at Pontoise, and again a long while at Beauvais. There he received another message from Rouen by a man who had risked his life to convey it. It was the voice of an expiring town, and said merely that fifty thousand men had died of famine in Rouen and its environs. The duke of Burgundy was touched by this sad tale, and promised succour; then having got rid of the messenger, and feeling assured that he should hear no more of Rouen, he turned his back on Normandy, and took the king to Provins.

A surrender was then inevitable; but the king of England, desirous of making an example on account of so long a resistance, wished to have the inhabitants at his mercy. The Rouennese, who well knew what was the mercy of Henry V, resolved to undermine a wall, and to pass out that way by night with arms in their hands, trusting in God's grace. The king and the bishops reconsidered the matter, and the archbishop of Canterbury personally offered the besieged the following terms of capitulation: (1) their lives to be spared, five men excepted (those of the five who were rich, or churchmen, got themselves out of the difficulty, and Alain Blanchard paid for all; the English were bent on an execution, in order to ratify the principle that the resistance had been rebellion against the lawful king); (2) for the same reason, Henry insured to the town all the privileges which the kings of France, his ancestors, had granted to it, "before the usurpation of Philip of Valois"; (3) it had to pay a tremendous fine — 300,000 gold crowns — one-half before the end of January (it was already the 19th of that month), the other half in February, 1419. To squeeze all that from a depopulated, ruined town was no easy matter.

HENRY AND JOHN THE FEARLESS (1419 A.D.)

The king of England being occupied with the task of organising the country he had conquered, granted a truce to the two French parties, the Burgundians and the Armagnacs. He felt it necessary to refit his army; and, above all, to collect money and discharge his debts to the bishops, who had lent him funds for his long expedition.

Henry was so far from apprehending danger from the dauphin, that he was not afraid to displease the duke of Burgundy. The latter sought an interview with him, and proposed to him a marriage with a daughter of

Charles VI, with Guienne and Normandy for a dower; but Henry required also Brittany as a dependence of Normandy, besides Maine, Anjou, and Touraine.

But the duke of Burgundy had about him persons who besought him to treat with them. They were followers of the dauphin, Barbazan, and Tannegui Duchâtel, the commanders of his troops. It was full time France should become self-reconciled, when her ruin was so imminent. The parliament of Paris, and that of Poitiers, laboured equally to that end; so, too, did the queen, who talked, wept, and found means to move his hardened soul.

On the 11th of July was beheld, at the bridge of Pouilly, this singular spectacle: the duke of Burgundy surrounded by the old servants of the duke of Orleans, and by the brothers and kinsmen of the Agincourt prisoners, and of the victims butchered in Paris. Of his own accord he knelt before the dauphin. A treaty of amity and mutual aid was signed and submitted to by both parties. But on the 29th of July, less than three weeks after the signing of the treaty, the Burgundian garrison of Pontoise, near Paris, suffered themselves to be surprised by the English; the inhabitants fled to Paris, which they filled with consternation, and this augmented when, on the 30th, the duke of Burgundy, carrying away the king from Paris to Troyes, passed beneath the walls of the capital, without making any other provision for the defence of the distracted Parisians than naming his nephew, a boy of fifteen, captain of the town.

Seeing all this, the dauphin's followers believed, rightly or wrongly, that the duke had a secret understanding with the English, and his servants told him, it is alleged, that he would perish in an interview which the dauphin sought with him. The dauphin's people had set about erecting on the bridge of Montereau the gallery in which it was to take place: a long, tortuous wooden gallery, without any barrier in the middle, contrary to the custom always observed in that suspicious age. In spite of all this he persisted in his resolution to meet the dauphin: such was the wish of Dame de Giac, who never quitted him.

As the duke did not come in time, Tannegui Duchâtel went to fetch him. The duke hesitated no longer, but slapped him on the shoulder, saying: "Here is the man I trust in." Duchâtel made him hasten his pace, for the dauphin, he said, was waiting. In this way he separated him from his suite, so that he entered the gallery along with none but the sire de Noailles, brother of the captal de Buch, who was in the service of the English, and had just taken Pontoise. Neither of them came out alive (September 10th, 1419).

The altercation which took place is variously related. Tannegui Duchâtel, however, averred that he had not struck the duke. Others boasted that they had done so. One of them, Le Bouteiller, said: "I said to the duke of Burgundy: 'Thou didst cut off the hand of the duke of Orleans, my master; I am going to cut off thine.'" However little worthy of regret was the duke of Burgundy, his death did the dauphin immense mischief. John the Fearless and his party had both fallen very low, and in a little time there would have been no more avowed Burgundians. Everyone was beginning to despise and hate him; but from the moment he was killed all were again Burgundians.

THE TREATY OF TROYES (1420 A.D.)

We must not suppose that Paris easily admitted the foreigner, but extreme lassitude and inexpressible suffering made everyone only too happy to find a pretext for a settlement with Henry. Each man exaggerated

[1419-1420 A.D.]

to himself his feelings of pity and indignation. The shame of calling in the stranger was veiled by a fair show of just vengeance; but the real fact was that Paris yielded, because it was perishing of hunger. The queen yielded, because, after all, if her son was not to be king, her daughter, at least, would be queen. The duke of Burgundy's son, Philip the Good, was the only person who acted sincerely; he had his father's death to avenge. But he, too, doubtless, thought to find his advantage in the new order of things; the Burgundy branch would thrive by the ruin of the elder branch, by placing on the throne a stranger, who would never have more than one foot on the continent, and who, if he were wise, would govern France through the duke of Burgundy.

Paris then left the Burgundians, who again possessed full authority in the town, to do as they thought fit. Young Saint-Pol, nephew to the duke of Burgundy, and captain of Paris, was sent, in November, to the king of England, with Maître Eustace Aloy, "in the name of the city, the clergy, and the commune." He received them extremely well, declaring that he desired nothing but the independent possession of what he had conquered, and the hand of the princess Catherine; and he said graciously: "Am I not myself of the blood royal of France? If I become the king's son-in-law, I will defend him against all men living." He obtained more than he demanded. His ambassadors, encouraged by the inclinations of the new duke of Burgundy, asserted their master's right to the crown of France, and that right the duke acknowledged. The king of England had spent three years in conquering Normandy; the death of John the Fearless seemed to give him France in one day.



FRENCH MAN-AT-ARMS, BEGINNING OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The treaty concluded at Troyes, May 20th, 1420, in the name of Charles VI, secured to the king of England the hand of the daughter of the king of France, and the reversion of the kingdom: "It is agreed that immediately after our decease the crown and realm of France shall remain and be perpetually to our said son King Henry and his heirs. The faculty and exercise of governing and ordering the public affairs of the said realm shall be and remain, during our life, to our said son King Henry, with the counsel of the nobles and sages of the said realm. During our life the letters pertaining to matters of justice shall be written and shall proceed under our name and seal; nevertheless, for as much as extraordinary cases may occur, it shall be competent to our son to write his letters to our subjects, wherein he shall order, prohibit, and command, on our behalf, and on his own, as regent." After this, was not the subsequent article a mockery? "All conquests which shall be made by our said son king, over the disobedient, shall be and shall be made to our profit."

This monstrous treaty concluded worthily with these lines, in which the king proclaimed the dishonour of his family, the father proscribed his son: "Considering the enormous crimes and misdemeanours perpetrated upon the said realm of France by Charles, styling himself (*soi-disant*) dauphin of Viennois, it is agreed that we, our said son the king, and also our very dear son Philip, duke of Burgundy, will in no wise treat concerning peace or concord with the said Charles, nor will we treat by ourselves or others, except with the consent and counsel of all and each of us three, and of the three estates of the two realms aforesaid."

The mother received prompt payment for the shameful phrase, *soi-disant dauphin*. Isabella immediately had 2,000 francs a month assigned to her, payable out of the mint at Troyes. For this price she denied her son, and gave up her daughter. The English took from the king of France, at one stroke, both his kingdom and his child. The poor girl was forced to wed a master, and brought him for dower her brother's ruin.[p]

HENRY'S STRUGGLE WITH THE DAUPHIN (1420-1422 A.D.)

Such was the tenor of the Treaty of Troyes, so glorious to Henry, yet so impracticable of accomplishment, that it must be doubted whether there was any sincerity in the French signers of it. To be avenged of the dauphin, and to crush him by the assistance of England, was evidently the foremost thought, the first desire. But it is scarcely credible that the duke of Burgundy looked forward to continuing, after the accomplishment of his vengeance, the faithful vassal of the house of Lancaster. The arrangement of one king governing the two countries was plainly impracticable. And that Henry himself could have entertained it only shows how the most vigorous intellects may allow their perspicacity and sense to be clouded by success and superstition. He was well aware that his new position could only be preserved by force of arms. On the occasion of his marriage with the princess Catherine, which took place on June 2nd, the knights of both countries were for celebrating the event by a tournament. But he forbade the rival combat, and told those who proposed it to join him in the siege of Sens, where they might exercise their prowess against the Armagnacs. Sens made but a trifling resistance.[h] Next, this implacable hunter of men hurried to Montereau, and not being able to reduce the castle, he had his prisoners hanged by the ditch sides.

With all his impetuosity he was forced to have patience before Melun, where the brave Barbazan detained him many months. The king of England, employing all the means of which he could avail himself, took Charles VI and the two queens to the siege, presenting himself as the son-in-law of the king of France, speaking in his father-in-law's name, and using his wife as a bait and a snare. All these clever devices were ineffectual. The besieged resisted valiantly; obstinate conflicts took place round the walls, and beneath them, in the mines and countermines, and Henry did not spare his own person. At last, however, provisions failed, and the garrison were constrained to surrender. Henry, according to his custom, accepted the capitulation, and put to death several citizens, all the Scotchmen who were in the place, and even two monks.

During the siege he had got the Burgundians to deliver up to him Paris and the four fortresses, Vincennes, the Bastille, the Louvre, and the Tour de Nesle. He made his entry in December, riding between the king of France and the duke of Burgundy. The latter was dressed in mourning, in token

of grief and vengeance, perhaps also from a feeling of shame for the unworthy part he played in thus introducing the foreigner. The king of England was accompanied by his brothers, the dukes of Clarence and Bedford, the duke of Exeter, the earl of Warwick, and all his lords. The king of England was well received in Paris. He entered into formal possession as regent of France, by assembling the estates on the 6th of December, 1420, and making them sanction the Treaty of Troyes.

That the son-in-law might be sure of inheriting, it was necessary that the son should be proscribed. The duke of Burgundy and his mother presented themselves before the king of France, sitting as judge in the Hôtel St. Pol, to make "great plaint and clamour of the piteous death of the late duke John of Burgundy." The king of England was seated on the same bench as the king of France. Messire Nicholas Raulin demanded in the name of the duke of Burgundy and his mother that Charles, styling himself dauphin, Tannegui Duchâtel, and all the murderers of the duke of Burgundy, should be carted through the streets, with torches in their hands, to make *amende honorable*. The king's advocate spoke to the same effect, and the university supported the demand. The king authorised the prosecution, and Charles was cried and cited at the Marble Table, to appear within three days before the parliament. He did not put in an appearance and was condemned by default, sentenced to banishment, and stripped of all right to the crown of France (January 3rd, 1421).

The cumbrous and devouring army which Henry brought with him was but too necessary to him. His brother Clarence was defeated and killed, with two or three thousand English, in Anjou (battle of Baugé, March 23rd, 1421). In the north even the count d'Harcourt had taken up arms against the English, and was overrunning Picardy. Saintrailles and La Hire were advancing by forced marches to combine with him. All the men of family were gradually going over to the side of Charles VII, to the party that made bold expeditions and adventurous forays. The peasants, it is true, who were the sufferers by these pillaging exploits, would in the long run declare for a master who could and would protect them.

The ferocity of the old Armagnac marauders was of service to Henry's cause. He did a popular thing in besieging Meaux, the captain of which town, the bastard De Vaurus, a sort of ogre, had filled the country round with indescribable terror. But as the bastard and his men expected no mercy, they defended themselves with desperate determination. They detained the English the whole winter, eight long months, before Meaux, till cold, want, and pestilence consumed that fine army. The siege began on the 6th of October, and on the 18th of December, Henry, who already saw his forces diminishing, wrote urgently for fresh soldiers to Germany and Portugal. Englishmen were probably more costly to him than those foreigners. To induce the German mercenaries to take service with him rather than with the dauphin, he caused them to be told, among other things, that he would pay them in better coin.

He could not reckon on the duke of Burgundy. That prince appeared for a short while at the siege of Meaux, but soon withdrew, under pretence of going into Burgundy, and obliging the towns in his duchy to accept the Treaty of Troyes. Henry had good reason to believe that the duke himself had secretly instigated their resistance to a treaty which annulled the contingent rights of the house of Burgundy to the crown, as well as those of the dauphin, the duke of Orleans, and all the French princes. And why had young Philip made such a sacrifice to the friendship of the English?

Because he thought he needed their aid to avenge his father and beat his enemy. But it was much rather they who had need of him. Fortune had forsaken them. Whilst the duke of Clarence was getting himself beaten in Anjou, the duke of Burgundy had been brilliantly successful in Picardy, where he had come up with the dauphin's partisans, Saintrailles and Gamaches, before they could form a junction with d'Harcourt, and had defeated and made them prisoners.

During that interminable siege of Meaux, whilst Henry was seeing his fine army dissolving away around him, word was brought him that the queen had been delivered of a boy at Windsor Castle. He evinced no joy, and comparing his own destiny with that of the child, he said, with prophetic sadness: "Henry of Monmouth will have had a short reign and will have conquered much; Henry of Windsor will reign long and will lose all. God's will be done!"

Henry was still young, but he had toiled much in this world, his time for rest was come; he had never had any since his birth. He was attacked, after his winter campaign, with an acute irritation of the bowels, a malady very common in those days. Being warned by the physicians that his end was at hand, he commended his son to his brothers, and gave them two wise counsels; first, to conciliate the duke of Burgundy, and secondly, in any treaty that might be made, to manage always so as to keep Normandy.

He died at Vincennes on the 31st of August, 1422; Charles VI followed him on the 21st of October. The people of Paris shed tears for their poor mad king as freely as the English for their victorious Henry V. "The whole people," says the Bourgeois de Paris,[q] "were in the streets weeping and crying, as if each had lost the friend he most loved. Truly, their lamentations were like those of the prophet, '*Quomodô sedet sola civitas plena populo!*' The petty folk of Paris cried, 'Oh, most dear prince, never shall we have one so good! Never shall we see thee more! Cursed be death! We shall never have aught but war since thou hast left us. Thou art gone to rest; we remain in tribulation and sorrow.'"

Charles VI was carried to St. Denis, "poorly accompanied for a king of France. There were only his chamberlain, his chancellor, his confessor, and some subordinate officers." One prince only attended the funeral, and that was the duke of Bedford. When the corpse was lowered into the grave, the ushers-at-arms broke their wands and threw them into the grave, and reversed their maces. Then Berri, king-at-arms of France, cried out, over the grave, "May it please God to have mercy on the soul of the very high and very excellent prince Charles, king of France, sixth of the name, our natural and sovereign lord."[p] And then he added, "God grant long life to Henry, by the grace of God, king of France and of England, our sovereign lord." About the same time at Mehun-sur-Yèvre, in Berri, some French knights unfurled the royal banner, crying, "Long live King Charles, seventh of the name, by the grace of God, king of France."[b]

WOES OF THE PEOPLE — THE *DANSE MACABRE*

After having spoken of the death of the king, we must mention that of the people. From 1418 to 1422, the depopulation was frightful. The history of those dismal years runs in a murderous circle; war leads to famine, famine to pestilence, and pestilence again brings round famine. It is like that night of the Exodus, in which the angel passes and repasses, touching each house with the sword.

[1418–1424 A.D.]

When men have come to that pass they weep no more; there is an end to tears, or there mingle even with tears gleams of hellish joy and savage laughter. It was the most tragical characteristic of the times that in the gloomiest moments there were alternations of frantic gaiety. The beginning of that long series of evils, "of that woeful dance," as the Bourgeois de Paris[a] says, was the madness of Charles VI, and contemporaneously therewith the too famous masquerade of the satyrs, the piously burlesque mysteries, and the *basoche* farces.[1]

The year in which the duke of Orleans was murdered was distinguished by the organisation of the corporation of minstrels. That corporation, quite indispensable of course in so joyous a period, became important and respected. Treaties of peace were cried through the streets with a mighty strumming of violins; hardly any six months passed in which a peace was not cried and sung. The eldest son of Charles VI, the first dauphin, was an indefatigable player on the harp and the spinet. He had a great staff of musicians; and in addition to these, he used to call in the aid of the choirboys of Notre Dame. He sang, danced, and "balled" (*balait*), night and day, and that even in the year of the Cabochians, whilst they were killing his friends. He killed himself, too, by dint of singing and dancing.

It seems an ascertained fact that in the fourteenth century dancing became involuntary and maniacal in many countries. The violent processions of the Flagellants set the first example. The great epidemics, and the terrible and lasting shock they gave to the nerves of the survivors, easily gave occasion to St. Vitus' dance. These phenomena are, as we know, contagious. The spectacle of the convulsions acted with so much the more force, as there was nothing in men's souls but convulsion and vertigo; and then the sick and the hale danced together promiscuously. They would catch each other violently by the hand, in the streets and the churches, and foot it round in a ring. Many a one who at first laughed at this sight, or looked on coldly, became at last bewildered, his head reeled, and he, too, reeled and danced with the rest. The rings went on multiplying, interlacing; they became bigger and bigger, more and more heady, fast, and furious, as though they were huge coiling reptiles, that momently swelled to view. There was no stopping the monster, but its joints might be lopped; the electric chain was broken by one falling with feet and fists on some one of the dancers. The rude dissonance interrupting the harmony, they found themselves free, otherwise they would have gone on reeling until utterly exhausted, and have danced themselves to death.

This phenomenon of the fourteenth century does not occur again in the fifteenth; but in the latter we find, in England, France, and Germany, a strange amusement, which reminds us of those great popular dances of the sick and dying. It was called the dance of the dead, or *danse macabre*. It was a great favourite with the English, who introduced it into France.

The spectacle of the dance of the dead was enacted in Paris in 1424, in the cemetery of the Innocents. That narrow space in which the enormous

[1 In 1402 letters-patent were issued by the king permitting the bourgeois of Paris to constitute themselves into a religious fraternity for the representation of the "Mystery of the Passion." This is the origin of the modern tragic theatre. The "morality plays," or comedies, were created by the clerks of the *basoche*—the corporation formed by the clerks of the *procureurs* of the parliament of Paris. This body exercised extensive jurisdiction over its members—its head bore the title of "king." In the reign of Charles VI playing-cards were perfected, and about 1420 Jan van Eyck, called Jean of Bruges, discovered a drying oil, which has caused him to be regarded as the inventor of oil painting. Hitherto men had used distemper, fresco, gum, paste, or white of egg.[b]

city for so many ages accumulated the remains of almost all its inhabitants had been at first both a cemetery and a laystall, haunted at night by robbers, and in the evening by wantons, who plied their trade among the tombs. Philip Augustus enclosed it with walls, and to purify it dedicated it to St. Innocent, a child crucified by the Jews. In the fourteenth century the churches were already very full, and it became the fashion among the good citizens to bury their dead in the cemetery. Such was the suitable theatre of the *danse macabre*. It was begun in September, 1424, when the heat had diminished, and the first rain had rendered the smell of the place less offensive. The performances lasted many months.

Whatever disgust both the place and the spectacle might inspire, it was matter suggestive of much thought to see in that fatal period, in a town so frequently and so cruelly visited by death, the hungry, sickly, scarce living multitude, merrily making death itself a matter of spectacle, attending with insatiable avidity to its moralising buffooneries, and enjoying them so heartily as to tread heedlessly upon the bones of their fathers, and on the gaping graves they were themselves about to fill.[p]

THE UNIVERSITY OF PARIS AND THE COUNCIL OF CONSTANCE

A very different phase of life which demands at least a passing notice is that which clustered about the wonderful University of Paris.[a] As early as the thirteenth century, the university shone in all its glory. Born in the shadow of the cloister of the bishopric, and primarily confounded with the ancient cathedral college of the town, it had obtained, little by little, immunities and privileges by favour of which it had grown and had reached a point where it was dependent upon no one but the court of Rome. Among the popes who conferred the most important privileges may be cited Alexander III, Innocent III, and his successor Honorius III, all promoters of the progress of knowledge, all jealously seeking to retain for the church that superiority of studies and learning to which its power was bound. The University of Paris rose rapidly above the universities of Italy, the only ones with which it was then in serious rivalry. It became the most important ecclesiastical and scientific college of Europe, the school whence the high clergy of France was recruited, as well as that of a large part of Christianity. It belonged to the church by its creation, by its studies in which theology predominated, and by its object, which was to prepare the learned candidates for the obtention of livings. For all its rights it depended on the holy see, which subjected it to visits and regulations. Meanwhile it formed in the bosom of the church itself a vast corporation (*universitas*), governing itself by its own laws with an extended liberty.

It was divided into four faculties: arts or philosophy which comprised nearly all the known sciences; theology; decree or canonical law; and medicine. The faculty of arts had a particular celebrity; it is to it that the capital of France owes its appellation of the Modern Athens. The faculty of theology was not less celebrated after the lectures of Roscellinus and Abelard. That of law was incomplete, since civil law, which restored to honour the work of the great Italian jurists, was taught in Paris only subsidiarily. It even ceased to exist at the beginning of the year 1220, although the laws of Justinian had found able interpreters in France as well as in Italy. The decree of the pope, Honorius III, to suppress its instruction in Paris, had probably its entire concentration in the college of Boulogne for an object. In any case, that suppression was only

for a time, and a little later at Orleans a special university was founded, called the University of Law. As to the study and profession of medicine, it is well known that in the Middle Ages it was a prerogative of the religious orders almost exclusively.

Each faculty held special assemblies, in which the masters and graduates had deliberative voice. The four faculties met once a year to elect their rector, the formulæ of which elections, determined with infinite care, in order to guarantee liberty of vote and prevent intrigue, presented a great analogy to the election of a pope. Thus the University of Paris possessed a liberal government, with a regular hierarchy, where degrees conferred powers, and where superior intelligence ruled.

The pope gave it its highest protection. He made the rules of study, intervened in disputes with the civil authorities. The principal ecclesiastical privilege of the University of Paris was that of being dependent on no bishop, and having its own jurisdiction. Its members could not be excommunicated except by the court of Rome.[9]

It is one of the strangest contrasts of history that while France was at the lowest ebb of its national history, the University of Paris was attempting to carry out one of the greatest revolutions in the history of Europe. The conciliar movement in the church, which produced such great international gatherings as the councils of Constance and of Bâle, and which aimed to limit papal absolutism by something like a parliamentary system, was due to the work of men like Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, and Pierre D'Ailly, scholar and prelate. It was universally admitted that abuses had crept into the administration of the church. There was evidently something wrong when, while Frenchmen were perishing from famine, and France was on the verge of ruin, the papal court at Avignon luxuriated on a revenue that was more than royal, and a pope (John XXII) could accumulate a treasure of eighteen millions of gold florins, and jewels and vestments estimated at seven millions more.

But the evils which date from the residence at Avignon were increased twofold during the schism. All Christendom was in doubt how this would end. For the civil war in the church had divided the countries under rival obediences. France, Scotland, and Spain adhered to the pope at Avignon; and England, Germany, and Italy obeyed the Italian pope.

At first they tried to induce the rivals to resign; and Pedro de Luna, who was elected pope at Avignon as Benedict XIII, won the high office by declaring that he would resign as easily as take off his hat. But the wily prelate, after his election, declared that no earthly power could dethrone him, and for more than a decade defied the attempts of reformers to achieve union. It was then that in the University of Paris the theologians began agitation for a universal council, as supreme over the pope. It is said that a German doctor began the movement, but the credit has gone to France. First at Pisa and then at Constance, the great parliaments of the church took in hand the reformation.

In the later council (1414–1418) union was achieved by the deposition of opposing popes and the election of Martin V (see volume on The Papacy), but the decree *Frequens* which demanded regular meeting of councils in the future, was gradually lost sight of in the following pontificates, and the great experiment of a constitutional church was a failure. That such an attempt should be made while France was in the throes of this great Hundred Years' War, and that mostly by Frenchmen, shows that alongside of the story of carnage, crime, and superstition, there were signs of intellectual life and

earnest effort of reformers, which are suggestive in the age of Wycliffe and Huss.

A strange page of history is opened here. Sigismund, emperor of Germany, who presided at the council of Constance, was anxious to play a great part in the world's affairs. He took advantage of the great international assemblage in his dominions to attempt to put himself at the head of a European confederacy to fight the Turks, who were advancing along the Danube.

To accomplish this he made a journey into France and England to try to prevent the war. His visit took place just before the fatal invasion of Henry V which brought the victory of Agincourt.[1] To raise the money for that journey Sigismund made over the mark of Brandenburg to Frederick of Hohenzollern, burggraf of Nuremberg, and thus founded the power of the Hohenzollern.

Henry V, was willing to accede to Sigismund's plans, but although he even offered the succession of Hungary as a bribe, the court of France refused to make the peace he desired, and Sigismund's great effort at European concord resulted in only one thing — the foundation of the great dynasty which rules in Germany to-day. France and England went their own way, bringing mutual disaster for another generation.[a]

[1 It was Sigismund's grandfather, the blind King John of Bohemia, whose death at Crécy gave the famous motto, *Ich dien*, to the prince of Wales.]





CHAPTER VIII

THE RESCUE OF THE REALM

[1422–1431 A.D.]

No longer on St. Denis will we cry,
But Joan la Pucelle shall be France's saint.
— SHAKESPEARE.

THE king proclaimed at St. Denis was an infant of ten months, grandson, on his mother's side, of Charles VI. His two uncles ruled in his name, — one the duke of Bedford in France; the other the duke of Gloucester in England. This child was recognised as sovereign of the kingdom of France by parliament, by the university, by the first prince of the blood, Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy, and by the dowager queen, Isabella of Bavaria. Paris, Île-de-France, Picardy, Artois, Flanders, Champagne, and Normandy — that is to say, almost all the country north of the Loire — and Guienne, south of that river, obeyed him.

The king proclaimed in Berri, sole surviving son of Charles VI, was a youth of nineteen years, graceful bearing, but weak in body, pale of figure, of small courage, and ever in fear of violent death; and besides, adds Chastelain,[a] "a good Latinist, a fine *raconteur*, and most wise in council." Such indeed he was later on; but for the present and for many years to come he showed spirit only for his own pleasures and a sort of dull apathy in matters of state and in the face of peril. His authority was recognised only in Touraine, Orleans, Berri, Bourbonnais, Auvergne, Languedoc, Dauphiné, and Lyonnais. Indifferent to disaster, he was resigned to hearing himself called derisively "the king of Bourges." To Poitiers he transported his council, his parliament, and his university. But Bourges and Poitiers were still great towns in his eyes; he dragged his little court from castle to castle, completely submissive to the sire de Giac, to Le Camus de Beaulieu, to the sire de la Trémouille, and willingly enduring the all-powerful influence of his mother-in-law Yolande of Anjou.[b]

The young king, brought up by the Armagnacs, found in them his chief support, and so shared their unpopularity. These Gascons were the most veteran soldiers in France, but the greatest and most cruel plunderers. The

hatred they inspired in the north would have been sufficient to create there a Burgundian and English party. The brigands of the south seemed more of foreigners than the foreigners.

Charles VII next made trial of the foreigners themselves, of those who had gained experience in the English wars. He called the Scotch to his aid. These were the most mortal enemies of England, and their hatred might be relied on as much as their courage. The greatest hopes were built on these auxiliaries. A Scotchman was made constable of France; another, count of Touraine. Notwithstanding, however, their incontestable bravery, they had often been beaten in England. They were not only beaten in France, at Crevant and Verneuil (1423, 1424), but destroyed: the English took care that none of them escaped. It was asserted that the Gascons, out of jealousy against the Scotch, had not supported them.

The English narrowly escaped giving Charles VII an ally far more useful and important than the Scotch — the duke of Burgundy. So little concert was there between the two brothers, that at the selfsame time Bedford married the duke of Burgundy's sister, and Gloucester was commencing war against him. A word as to this romantic story.

The duke of Burgundy, count of Flanders, never thought himself secure of his Flanders until he should have flanked it with Holland and Hainault. These two counties had fallen into the hands of a girl, the countess Jacqueline, widow of the dauphin John. The duke of Burgundy married her to a cousin of his own, a sickly boy. Jacqueline, who was a handsome young woman, did not resign herself to so irksome a fate, but left her sorry mate, nimbly crossed the Straits, and herself proposed marriage to the duke of Gloucester. Gloucester committed the folly of accepting the proposal (1423). He espoused Jacqueline's cause, thus beginning against the duke of Burgundy, the indispensable ally of England, a war which, for the latter, was a question of actual existence, a war without treaty, in which the sovereign of Flanders would risk his last man. The incensed duke of Burgundy concluded a secret alliance with the duke of Brittany, and then he made pecuniary demands on Bedford. What could Bedford do? He had no money; instead of it, he offered an inestimable possession worth more than any sum of money — his whole barrier on the north (September, 1423). The bands of Charles VII came and lodged themselves in the very heart of English France, in Normandy; a pitched battle was fought before they could be expelled. It took place on the 17th of August, 1424, at Verneuil. In June, Bedford had regained the good will of the duke of Burgundy by an enormous concession, having pledged his eastern frontier to him, Bar-sur-Seine, Auxerre, and Mâcon.

All northern France was greatly in danger of thus falling bit by bit into the duke of Burgundy's hand; but suddenly the wind shifted. The sapient Gloucester, in the midst of this war begun for Jacqueline, forgets that he has married her, forgets that at that very moment she is besieged in Bergues, and weds another, a fair English woman. This new folly had the effect of an act of wisdom. The duke of Burgundy consented to be reconciled to the English, and made a show of believing all Bedford told him; the essential thing for him was to be able to despoil Jacqueline, and occupy Hainault, Holland, and afterwards Brabant, the succession to which could not but soon be opened.

Charles VII, therefore, derived little advantage from this event which seemed likely to be so profitable to him. The only benefit that accrued to him from it was that the count de Foix, governor of Languedoc, compre-

hended that the duke of Burgundy would sooner or later turn against the English, and declared that his conscience obliged him to recognise Charles VII as legitimate king. He placed Languedoc in subjection to him, with the clear understanding that the king should draw from it neither money nor troops, and should not in any wise interfere with the little royalty which the count de Foix had contrived for himself in that province. The friendship of the houses of Anjou and Lorraine seemed to promise more direct advantage to the party of Charles VII. The head of the house of Anjou was then a woman, Queen Yolande, relict of Louis II, duke of Anjou, count of Provence, and pretender to the throne of Naples; she was the daughter of the king of Aragon, by a lady of Lorraine, of the house of Bar. The English having committed the egregious mistake of troubling the houses of Anjou and Aragon, as regarded their pretensions to the throne of Naples, Yolande formed against them an alliance of Anjou and Lorraine with Charles VII. She married her daughter to the young king, and her son René to the only daughter of the duke of Lorraine. Yolande was of service to her son-in-law. By her sage counsels she removed the old Armagnacs from about him; she had the address to win the Bretons back to him, and caused the constable's sword to be conferred on the count of Richemont, brother of the duke of Brittany.

Charles VII, combining together the Bretons, Gascons, and Dauphinois, had thenceforth the real military strength of France on his side. Spain sent him Aragonese, Italy Lombards. But the war sped feebly for all that; money was wanting, and union still more so. The king's favourites frustrated Richemont's first enterprises; not, indeed, with impunity, for the stern Breton put to death two of them within six months, without form of trial. Since a favourite was necessary to the king, he gave him one of his own choosing, young La Trémouille, and the first use the latter made of his ascendency was to dismiss Richemont. The king, strange to say, forbade his constable to fight for him; the king's men and Richemont's were on the point of drawing their swords against each other. Thus Charles VII found his cause less advanced than ever.[c]

Meanwhile the towns were resisting the foreign domination. La Ferté-Bernard underwent in 1422 a four months' siege and only yielded to the earl of Salisbury in the last extremity. In 1427 the English, in order to get closer to the Loire, sent three thousand men-at-arms to besiege Montargis on the Loing. The town had only a small garrison under the brave La Faille, but the inhabitants supported him well.[b]

MONSTRELET DESCRIBES THE SIEGE OF MONTARGIS (1427 A.D.)

Shortly after their arrival the English built some bridges and passages over the river. This being done, they began to approach the town and fortress of Montargis, and attacked and destroyed several engines of war. But despite this, the besieged defended themselves valiantly, and kept the besiegers thus employed for the space of about two months. During this time tidings were carried to King Charles of France, which informed him that, if he did not shortly send succour to the besieged, they must needs yield to their adversaries. This news came to the knowledge of King Charles, and it is said that king summoned a council, where it was concluded and determined to send help to Montargis, or, at least, to reinforce it with men and provisions. The charge of the relief was bestowed upon the bastard John of Orleans and Étienne de Vignolles, known as La Hire.

They, with about sixteen hundred fighting men and skilful soldiers, took the road with much display, with the intention of victualling the said town of Montargis, and raising the siege. When they had come within half a league, as secretly as they could, they took counsel together and determined to make an attack upon some of the camps of the English, on both sides of the town. They had with them some of the garrison of the said town of Montargis who would direct them. They attacked the camps of the English with much violence (which attack the English had not guarded against), crying, "Montjoie St. Denis!" and began to fire a number of the camps, and killed and captured several of the English. Such was the spirit they put into their work, that the camp of Sir John de la Pole was overthrown in a short space of time; but the same lord and about eight others escaped in a small boat. The water was so high at that time that the bridges the English had made were covered, so that when they attempted to escape they fell beside these bridges and were drowned.



CHARLES VII

(From an old French engraving)

Whilst this was going on, the bastard of Orleans was on the other side of the town, attacking on foot the camp of Henry Basset, and there being much to do, the others, when they had overthrown the first camp, came to his assistance. The English, perceiving that the victory was not to them, began to retreat to the camp of the earl of Warwick, and crossed a bridge so hastily and in such numbers that the bridge gave way beneath them, and there perished miserably very many; for besides this the inhabitants of Montargis, who had sallied forth boldly to the help of their own people, slaughtered and captured many, and did not spare them.

Meanwhile, the earl of Warwick assembled his men as quickly as he could. But when he learned the great loss and pitiable defeat of his host, of which from a thousand to fifteen hundred men were either killed or captured, he departed and went his way, with the remainder of his men of which the greater number were on foot. They retreated to the castle of Landou in Nemours, and to other places under their suzerainty.[e] This was the first time that the bastard of Orleans was intrusted with a command of any importance, and he did not fail to justify his brilliant début.[f]

THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS (1428-1429 A.D.)

The following year (1428) Bedford resolved to push military operations vigorously and to force the barrier of the Loire. In the month of June the earl of Salisbury debarked at Calais with six thousand of the best soldiers England ever had in France; Bedford joined him there with four thousand men drawn from garrisons in Normandy, and their army took Jargeau, Janville, Meung-sur-Loire, Thoury, Beaugency, Marchenoir, and La Ferté-Hubert, thus approaching Orleans step by step.

[1428–1429 A.D.]

Orleans was the gate to Berri, the Bourbonnais and Poitou. This taken, the "king of Bourges" would become the king of Dauphiné and Languedoc. October 12th, 1428, the English appeared before its ramparts and at once formed around the place a series of bastilles, each of which was commanded by one of the first lords of England—by William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk; the "English Achilles," Lord Talbot; and William Glasdale, who had sworn to kill everyone in Orleans. Salisbury was commander-in-chief. The Orléanais, who had been expecting the siege, had fortified the heart of their town by burning the suburbs. Their captain was the sire de Gaucourt whom the English had held captive for thirteen years, because he had persisted in defending Harfleur against them. The garrison did not number more than five hundred at the most, but they were all hardened warriors. Moreover, the bourgeois were looking out for themselves. They had formed thirty-four companies—and each undertook the defence of one of the thirty-four towers of the wall.

Artillery was beginning to play a great rôle in battles and sieges. That of the besiegers was badly handled, and the bourgeois laughed at the unskilful English cannoneers who threw eighty-pound balls into the town and killed no one.[1] The Orléanais artillery was very different. It was composed of seventy pieces, aimed by twelve master cannoneers, expert at firing. Each cannon had its name and its own particular duty. The good cannon *Riflard* (Clean Sweep) killed its man at every shot.[b] Another one, too, was the celebrated culverin of a skilful Lorrainian cannoneer, Maître Jean; the two, man and culverin, made the finest hits. The English came at last to know this Maître Jean; he never ceased killing them except to make game of them: from time to time he would drop down and pretend to be dead; his body was carried off into the town; the English were in ecstasy when—behold! back he would come, alive and merry, and fire upon them worse than ever.[c]

But the luckiest shot of all was fired by a child [according to Grafton, the son of a gunner who had gone to dinner]. This schoolboy came across a fully loaded piece on the rampart. He lit the fuse and ran away. The ball went straight into the face of the earl of Salisbury, who was standing on one of the bastilles and to whom, at that very instant, William Glasdale was saying, "My lord, behold your town."

The English commander was dead; and the next day the bastard of Orleans, the handsome, brave Dunois, entered the town with the best knights of the time—La Hire, Saintrailles, Marshal de Broussac, and six or seven hundred soldiers. Others followed until little by little seven thousand were gathered in Orleans.[b]

The "Battle of the Herrings" (1429 A.D.)

The siege continued with various success to the 12th of February, 1429, with sundry episodes in the way of sorties, feigned attacks, conflicts about provision entering the town, and even duels, to amuse the two parties and try their respective mettle. They went on slowly completing their fortifications, and it was to be foreseen that the town would be at last almost entirely shut in.

However careless the king might appear about saving the appenage of the duke of Orleans, it was clear that, once that city had fallen, the English

[1 It was positively asserted that a ball had taken off a man's shoe without hurting his foot.]

would advance unhindered into Poitou, Berri, and the Bourbonnais, would live at the expense of those provinces, and ruin the south after having ruined the north. The duke de Bourbon sent his eldest son, the count de Clermont, under whom some Scotch forces and some lords of Touraine, Poitou, and Auvergne were to succour Orleans, cast provisions into it, and even hinder the arrival of provisions in the English camp. The duke of Bedford sent a supply from Paris under the conduct of the brave Sir John Fastolf; and he had availed himself of the old Cabochian enmity of Paris to Orleans, to add to his English detachment a considerable number of Parisian arblast men, and the provost of Paris himself. They took with them three hundred wagon-loads of provisions, particularly herrings, an article indispensable in Lent. Troops and wagons all marched in narrow file, and nothing could have been easier than to break their line and destroy them. The Gascon La Hire, who was in advance of the French, burned with impatience to fall upon them, but received express orders not to do so, from the prince, who was advancing slowly with the main body of his force.

Meanwhile, the English had taken the alarm, and Fastolf had drawn his men together under cover of the wagons and a line of sharp stakes which these provident English always carried with them. The English archers were posted on the right, the Parisian arblast men on the left. In spite of all the count de Clermont could say, his men were carried away by their impetuous rancour; the Scotch leaped from their saddles to fight the English on foot, and the Armagnac Gascons rushed upon their old enemies the Parisians; but the latter stood their ground. The Scotch and Gascons having thus broken their ranks, the English issued from behind their temporary ramparts, pursued them, and killed three or four hundred. The count de Clermont remained immovable. La Hire was so furious that he turned back upon the English who dispersed in the pursuit, and killed some of them. The count's party had to return to Orleans after this unlucky engagement, to which the Orléanais, always satirical, gave the name of the "battle of the Herrings"; in fact, the balls had burst the barrels; and the field was strewn with herrings more than with the slain.

Slight as was this check, it discouraged everyone. The most knowing hastened to quit a town that seemed lost. The young count de Clermont had the weakness to withdraw with his two thousand men; the admiral and the chancellor of France thought it would be a sad thing if the king's great officers should be taken by the English, and they too departed. As the men-at-arms no longer hoped for human aid, and the priests did not reckon very confidently on divine succour, the archbishop of Rheims took himself off, and even the bishop of Orleans left his flock to defend themselves as they could.

They all went away on the 18th of February, assuring the citizens that they would soon return in strength. Nothing could stay them. The bastard of Orleans, who with equal skill and valour defended the appenage of his house, had in vain been telling them since the 12th that a miraculous succour should be looked for, that a daughter of God, who promised to save the town, was coming from the marches of Lorraine. The archbishop, an ex-secretary of the pope, and an old diplomatist, paid little heed to this talk about miracles. Dunois himself did not reckon so exclusively on aid from on high as to neglect employing a very human and very politic means against the English. He sent Saintrailles to the duke of Burgundy, to beg him, as a relative of the duke of Orleans, to take the latter's town into his keeping. He was now asked to accept the grand and important possession of the centre of France, and he did not refuse the offer. He went straight to Paris, and told the affair

[1429 A.D.]

to Bedford, who answered dryly that he had not toiled for the duke of Burgundy's behoof. The latter, much offended, recalled all the troops he had at the siege of Orleans.

Supplies arriving with difficulty, discontent began in the town; many no doubt were of opinion that the town had made quite enough sacrifices for the sake of its lord, and that it was better Orleans should become English than cease to be. Things did not stop there. It was discovered that a hole had been made in the wall of the town; treachery was manifestly at work. Besides all this, Dunois could expect no help from Charles VII. The estates, assembled in 1428, had voted money and summoned the tenants of fiefs to fulfil their feudal duties. Neither money nor men had arrived.

We are not well acquainted with the intrigues that divided the little court of Charles. The divisions in it had naturally augmented in this its extreme distress. The old Armagnac advisers, whom Richemont and the king's mother-in-law had for a while removed, were in the way to regain their credit. That southern party would have been well pleased to have a king of the south holding his court at Grenoble. The duchess of Anjou, the king's mother-in-law, on the contrary, could not preserve Anjou if the English definitively passed the Loire. So far there was a community of interests between her and the house of Orleans. But the house of Anjou had so many other interests, so various and divergent, that she thought it expedient always to keep on fair terms with the English, and to negotiate perpetually. When the defence of Orleans appeared to be desperate (May, 1429), the old cardinal De Bar hastened to treat with Bedford, in the name of his nephew, René of Anjou, lest he should lose the inheritance of Lorraine, calculating that René could disavow his proceedings, should the affairs of Charles VII at any future time assume another aspect.

The impending ruin of Orleans had frightened the other towns of the Loire. The nearest, Angers, Tours, and Bourges, sent provisions to the besieged; Poitiers and La Rochelle, money; then, when the alarm increased, the Bourbonnais, Auvergne, and even Languedoc sent the Orléanais saltpetre, sulphur, and steel. Gradually all France became interested in the fate of one town, and moved with sympathy for the brave resistance of the men of Orleans and their fidelity to their lord. Orleans was pitied; so too was its duke. The captive Charles of Orleans could not defend his town.[1]

The English had one thing in their favour, namely, that their young king, Henry VI, was certainly a Frenchman by the mother's side, and grandson of Charles VI, whom he resembled but too much as regarded the weakness of his mind. The legitimacy of Charles VII, on the other hand, was very doubtful; he was born in 1403, in the high tide of his mother's intimacy with the duke of Orleans; and she herself had acquiesced in the acts in which he was called *soi-disant* dauphin. Henry VI had not yet been crowned at Rheims, but neither had Charles VII. The people in those days recognised a king but by two things, royal birth and the crown placed on his head with the church's solemn sanction. Charles VII was not king according to religion, nor was he sure that he was so according to nature. This question, of no moment for politicians of that class who decide after their own interests, was everything for the people, who are willing to obey only the right. A woman had obscured this great question of right, and by a woman it was cleared up. This second woman bore the name Jeanne Darc. She was soon to be famous as the Maid of Orleans.

[1 The duke of Orleans had been a captive in England since the battle of Agincourt.]

THE MAID OF ORLEANS (*LA PUCELLE*) (1429 A.D.)

The originality of the Maid of Orleans, and what determined her success, was not so much her valour or her visions as her good sense. Through all her enthusiasm, this daughter of the people saw the question clearly, and was able to solve it. She cut the knot which the politic and the men of little faith could not untie. She declared, in God's name, that Charles VII was the true heir, and she set him at ease as to his legitimacy, of which he himself had doubts. That legitimacy she sanctified, taking her king straight to Rheims, and gaining over the English, by the celerity of her movements, the decisive advantage of the coronation.

It was at Domrémy, just between Lorraine of the Vosges and that of the plain, between Lorraine and Champagne, that the beautiful and brave girl was born, who was to wield the sword of France so well.

Joan or Jeanne was the third daughter of a peasant, Jacques Darc,[1] and of Isabella of Romée. She had two godmothers, one of whom was named Jeanne, the other Sibylle. The eldest son having been named James (Jacques), another Peter (Pierre), the pious parents gave one of their daughters the more exalted name of St. John (Jean). Whilst the other children accompanied their father in his field work or tended cattle, the mother kept Joan at home for sewing or spinning. She did not learn to read or write, but she knew all her mother could teach her of sacred things. She acquired religion, not as a lesson or a ceremony, but in the homely popular form of a winter night's tale, as the simple faith of a mother.

Everybody knew her charity and her piety. They saw clearly she was the best girl in the village. What they did not know was that in her the life from above always absorbed the other life, and suppressed all vulgar development. Hers was the divine gift to remain a child in soul and body. She grew up, became strong and comely, but never knew the physical miseries of her sex. They were spared her, to the advantage of her mental growth and religious inspiration.

Joan had her share in the romantic adventures of those restless times. She saw poor fugitives arrive in the hamlet, and the kind-hearted girl assisted towards their reception, gave up her bed to them, and lay down in the hayloft. Her kindred, too, were once obliged to save themselves by flight. Then, when the inundation of brigands had passed off, the family returned and found the village sacked, the house devastated, and the church burned down. Thus she knew what war meant. She understood that anti-Christian state of things, and abhorred that reign of the devil, in which every man died in mortal sin. If, as everyone said, the ruin of the kingdom was the work of a woman, an unnatural mother, it might be that its salvation should proceed from a girl. This very fact was foretold in one of Merlin's prophecies, a prophecy which, variously enriched and modified in the several provinces, had become thoroughly Lorrainian in the country of Joan of Arc. It was a girl of the marches of Lorraine that was to save the realm. The prophecy had probably received this embellishment, in consequence of the recent marriage of René of Anjou with the heiress of the duchy of Lorraine, which was in reality a very fortunate event for France.

One summer's day, a fast day, Joan, being in the garden at noon with her father, close by the church, saw a dazzling light in that direction, and

[1] The family name was Darc, and the name of the Maid of Orleans was therefore, properly, Jeanne Darc, not Jeanne d'Arc as commonly written; but the latter has the sanction of general usage.]

[1428 A.D.]

heard a voice saying, "Be a good child, Joan, and go often to church." The poor girl was greatly frightened. Another time she again heard the voice and saw the light; but now she discerned it in noble figures, one of which had wings and seemed a sage counsellor. He said to her, "Joan, go to the aid of the king of France, and thou wilt restore him to his kingdom." She answered, trembling all over, "My Lord, I am but a poor girl; I cannot ride the war-horse, or lead men-at-arms." The voice replied: "Thou shalt go to M. de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and he will take thee before the king. St. Catherine and St. Margaret will be with thee to help thee." She remained stupefied and in tears, as if she had already beheld her whole future destiny.

The sage counsellor was none other than St. Michael, the stern archangel of judgment and battle. He returned again, cheered her courage, "and related to her the pity there was in the realm of France." Then came the white figures of female saints, surrounded with innumerable lights, their heads adorned with rich crowns, their voices sweet and melting even to tears. But Joan wept above all when the saints and angels left her. "I should have been very glad," she said, "if the angels had taken me away with them." Joan has told us nothing of the first inward conflict she sustained; but it is evident it took place, and endured a long while, since five years elapsed between her first vision and her departure from the home of her parents.

She encountered not only resistance but temptation in her own family. They tried to marry her, in the hope of bringing her back to a more rational way of thinking. A young man of the village alleged that she had promised him marriage when she was still a child; and as she denied the fact, he cited her before the ecclesiastical judge at Toul. It was supposed she would make no defence, but would submit to be cast by the court and married; but to everyone's great astonishment, she went to Toul, appeared in court, and spoke — she who had always held her peace.

To enable her to escape from the control of her family, it was necessary she should find in her family itself someone to believe her; this was a most difficult problem. Failing to persuade her father, she made a convert of her uncle, who took her away with him, under the pretext of her nursing his wife in her lying-in. She prevailed on him to go to the sire de Baudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and ask his support for her; but the man of war gave the peasant a very bad reception, and told him the only thing to be done was "to slap her well," and take her home to her father. She was not cast down by the rebuff, but determined to depart, and her uncle was constrained to accompany her. The decisive moment was come; she quitted her family and her native village forever; she embraced her friends, especially her dear little friend Mengette, whom she commended to God's keeping; but as for Haumette, the friend she loved above all others, she preferred to depart without seeing her.

She arrived then in the town of Vaucouleurs, dressed in her clumsy red peasant garments, and went along with her uncle to lodge with the wife of a wheelwright who took a liking to her. She had herself taken into Baudricourt's presence, and said to him boldly that "she came to him on the part of our Lord to bid him tell the dauphin to keep his ground steadily, and not give battle to his enemies; for our Lord would grant him succour in mid-Lent. The kingdom did not belong to the dauphin but to our Lord; nevertheless, it was our Lord's will that the dauphin should become king, and that he should hold the kingdom in trust." She went on to say that, in spite of

the dauphin's enemies, he would be king, and she would take him to be crowned. The captain was amazed, and suspecting there was some deviltry at work, he consulted the parish priest, who apparently entertained the same doubts. Joan had not spoken of her visions to any churchman. The priest, therefore, accompanied the captain to the wheelwright's house with his stole on, and adjured Joan to depart if she was sent by the evil spirit.

But the people did not doubt; their admiration was extreme; persons flocked from all parts to see her. It appears that Baudricourt sent to ask leave of the king. Meanwhile, he conducted Joan to the duke of Lorraine, who was ill and wished to consult her. He got nothing from her but advice to appease God's anger by becoming reconciled with his wife. He gave her encouragement notwithstanding. On her return to Vaucouleurs, she found a messenger from the king, who brought the permission she desired. The disaster of the battle of the Herrings disposed the king to accept every means of which he could avail himself. Joan had predicted the battle on the very day when it took place. The people of Vaucouleurs, entertaining no doubt of her mission, clubbed together to buy her a horse. The captain gave her only a sword.

It was a rough and very perilous journey she was about to make. The whole country was overrun by armed bands belonging to either party. There was now neither road nor bridge; the rivers were swollen; it was the month of February, 1429.

Joan at the Court

The court of Charles VII was far from being unanimous in the Maid's favour. That inspired girl, just come from Lorraine, and patronised by the duke of Lorraine, could not fail to strengthen with the king the party of the queen and her mother, the Lorraine and Anjou party. An ambush was laid for Joan at some distance from Chinon, and she escaped from it only by miracle.

So strong was the opposition against her that, after she was actually arrived, the council continued for two days to discuss the question whether or not the king should see her. Her enemies thought to postpone the matter indefinitely, by having it decided that inquiries should be made respecting her in her native place. Fortunately, she had friends also — the two queens, no doubt, and above all, the duke of Alençon, who, having recently come out of the hands of the English, was very impatient to carry the war into the north, and recover his duchy. The inhabitants of Orleans, to whom Dunois had been promising this marvellous aid since the 12th of February, sent to the king and claimed the Maid's presence.

The king received her at last, surrounded with the greatest pomp; which, in all probability, was adopted with the hope of disconcerting her. She presented herself humbly "as a poor shepherd wench," distinguished the king at the first glance from the crowd of lords among whom he had purposely mingled; and though he insisted, at first, he was not the king, she embraced his knees. But as he was not yet crowned, she styled him only dauphin: "Gentle dauphin," she said, "my name is Jehanne la Pucelle. The King of heaven sends you word by me that you shall be anointed and crowned in the town of Rheims, and you shall be lieutenant of the King of heaven, who is King of France."

The archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of France, and president of the king's council, summoned doctors and professors of theology, some of them priests, others monks, and ordered them to examine the Maid. The doctors

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being introduced and seated in a hall, Joan sat down on the end of the bench, and replied to their questions. She recounted the apparitions and the words of the angels, with dignified simplicity. A Dominican met her with a single objection, but it was one of weight: "Jehanne, thou sayest it is God's will to deliver the people of France; if such is his will he has no need of men-at-arms." The observation did not confound her. "Ah! *mon Dieu*," said she, "the men-at-arms will do battle, and God will give the victory." Another person was not so easily satisfied. This was Friar Séguin, a Limousin, professor of theology in the university of Poitiers, "a very sour man," says the chronicle. He asked her, in his Limousin French, "What language did the celestial voice speak?" Joan answered with rather too much sharpness, "A better one than yours." "Dost thou believe in God?" said the enraged doctor; "well then, God will not have us put faith in thy words unless thou show a sign." She answered, "I am not come to Poitiers to perform signs or miracles; my sign shall be to raise the siege of Orleans. Let me have men-at-arms, few or many, and I will go."



THE CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS

The question of her inspiration was made to depend on the test of her virginity. The duchess of Anjou, the king's mother-in-law, accomplished the ridiculous examination, with the aid of some ladies, to the honour of the Maid. Some Franciscans who had been sent to her native place to collect information, brought back the most satisfactory accounts. There was no more time to be lost. Orleans was crying out for help; Dunois was sending message upon message. The Maid was equipped, and a sort of establishment was formed for her. First of all they gave her for squire John Daulon, a brave knight of mature years, who belonged to the count de Dunois, and was the most respectable among his followers. She had also a noble page, two heralds-at-arms, a seneschal, and two valets; her brother, Pierre Darc, had also joined her suite. John Pasquerel, a friar, hermit of the order of St. Augustin, was assigned her for confessor.

The Deliverance of Orleans (1429 A.D.)

When we read the list of the captains who threw themselves into Orleans with Joan of Arc — La Hire, Saintrailles, Gaucourt, Culan, Coaraze, Armagnac; when we see that, independently of the Bretons under Marshal de Retz, and Marshal de St. Sévère's Gascons, Florent d'Illiers, captain of Châteaudun, had brought all the nobles of the vicinity to take part in this short expedition, the deliverance of Orleans seems less miraculous. One thing, however, was by all means wanting to enable these great forces to act with advantage, an essential, indispensable thing — unity of action. Dunois might have created this, had no more been requisite to that end than address and intelligence; but this was not enough. An authority was requisite, one surpassing that of the crown; the king's captains were not habituated to obey the king.

War had changed men into wild beasts, and these beasts required to be turned again to men, Christians, docile subjects. A great and difficult change! Some of these Armagnac captains were perhaps the most furious men that ever existed. It was a ludicrous and touching thing to see the sudden conversion of the old Armagnac brigands. They did not stop short halfway in their amendment. La Hire no longer ventured to utter an oath; but the Maid, compassionating the violence he did himself, allowed him to swear, "by his staff." The devils had all at once been transformed into little saints.

She had begun by insisting that they should renounce their wanton women, and should confess. Then in the course of her march along the Loire, she had an altar erected in the open air, at which she took the communion, and so did they. The first night they bivouacked, she lay down in full armour, as there were no women about her; but she was not yet habituated to such hardships, and she was ill in consequence. As for danger, she knew not what it meant. She wanted to cross over to the north side of the river, and march along the English bank and between the bastilles of the invaders, who, she asserted, would not stir. Her followers would not listen to her advice, but marched along the left bank, so as to pass two leagues above Orleans. Dunois came out to meet her: "I bring you," she said, "the best succour ever sent to anyone, the succour of the King of heaven. It comes not from me, but from God himself, who, at the entreaty of St. Louis and St. Charlemagne, has had pity on the town of Orleans, and will not suffer that the enemy should have both the duke's body and his town at once."

She entered the city slowly at eight in the evening (April 29th), the crowd scarcely allowing her to advance. Everyone strove eagerly to touch at least her horse. They gazed on her "as if they saw God." Talking gently to the people all the while, she proceeded to the church, and then to the houses of the duke of Orleans' treasurer, an honourable man, whose wife and daughter gave her welcome. She slept with Charlotte, one of the daughters.

She had entered the town along with the provisions, but the army marched down-stream again, to cross at Blois. She would, nevertheless, have had an immediate attack made on the English bastilles; but as she could not effect this, she sent a second peremptory message to those on the north side, and then proceeded to repeat her summons to those on the south. Glasdale, the captain, abused her in the coarsest terms, calling her cow-girl and ribald. In their hearts they believed her to be a witch, and were greatly afraid of her.

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They kept her herald, and were thinking of burning him, in hopes that this would, perhaps, break the charm.

The army not arriving, Dunois ventured forth in search of it. The archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of Charles VII, had detained the little army at Blois. The old politician was far from conceiving the existence of such an irresistible enthusiasm, or perhaps he feared it. It was, therefore, much against his will that he came to Orleans. The maid went out to meet him, with the people and the priests singing hymns. The procession passed and repassed before the English bastilles; and the army entered the town, protected by some priests and a girl (May 4th, 1429).

Joan, who, in the midst of her enthusiasm and her inspiration, had much shrewdness of apprehension, very clearly discerned the hostile temper of the new comers. She was right in surmising that there was a design to act without her. As she lay by Charlotte's side, she suddenly started up, exclaiming, "My God! the blood of our people is running on the ground. It was ill done! Why was I not wakened? Quick! my arms, my horse!" She was armed in a moment, galloped off at full speed, and met men already wounded, whom they were carrying back from the field. The fugitives faced round on her arrival. Dunois, who had also not been called, arrived on the ground at the same time. The bastille (one of those on the north side) was attacked again. Talbot strove to succour it; but fresh forces issued from Orleans; the Maid put herself at their head, and Talbot withdrew his men. The bastille was carried. This was her first victory, the first time she looked on a field of slaughter. She sought confession for herself and her followers; and declared that she would take the communion on the morrow, being the feast of the Ascension, and pass the day in prayer.

Advantage was taken of this resolution to hold a council without her, wherein it was determined that this time the besiegers should cross the Loire and attack St. Jean le Blanc, the bastille which most impeded the introduction of provisions into the town, and that a false attack should be made at the same time on the other side. The English then did what they ought to have done before. They concentrated their strength. With their own hands burning the bastille which was to have been attacked, they retired upon the other two on the south side, the Augustins and the Tournelles. The former was instantly attacked and carried, the success in this instance again being partly due to the Maid. The French were seized for a while with a panic, and rushed back towards the floating bridge; but the Maid and La Hire disentangled themselves from the throng, threw themselves into boats, and took the English in flank.

There remained the Tournelles. The victors passed the night before it; but they obliged the Maid, who had eaten nothing all day (it was Friday), to recross the Loire. Meanwhile the council had assembled. The Maid was told in the evening that it had been unanimously resolved that, since the town was now fully victualled, they should wait for a fresh reinforcement to attack the Tournelles. It is difficult to believe that such could have been the real intention of the leaders, for delay was extremely dangerous, since the English might at any moment be succoured by Fastolf. Probably the intention was to deceive the Maid and deprive her of the honour of the triumph she had so powerfully contributed towards securing. She disappointed them.

In the morning she rode to the Burgundy gate with a multitude of men-at-arms and citizens; but the sire de Gaucourt, grand-master of the king's household, kept it shut. The crowd opened the gate, and forced another near it. The sun was rising on the Loire when the whole concourse threw

themselves into the boats. On arriving, however, at the Tournelles, they felt that they wanted artillery, and they sent for some to the town. At last they attacked the outward rampart which protected the bastille. The English defended themselves valiantly. The Maid, perceiving that the assailants were beginning to show signs of weakness, jumped into the ditch, seized a ladder, and was in the act of applying it to the wall, when an arrow struck her between the neck and the shoulder. The English sallied out to seize her, but she was carried off by her own party. She only allowed a little oil to be poured on the wound, and confessed.

Meanwhile no progress was made, and night was at hand. Dunois himself gave orders to sound a retreat. A Basque had taken out of the hands of the Maid's squire that standard of hers which struck such dismay into the enemy. "When the standard touches the wall," said she, "you will be able to enter." "It is touching it." "In then! all is your own." And just as she had predicted, the assailants in a frenzy of enthusiasm climbed the wall "as though by one step." The English were at this moment attacked on two sides at once.

Meanwhile the men of Orleans, who watched the fight from the other side of the Loire, could contain themselves no longer. They threw open their gates and rushed to the bridge, but there was an arch broken; they pushed a rickety plank across the opening, and a knight of St. John ventured to pass over the frail spar in full armour. The bridge was hastily repaired, and the whole multitude hurried to the other side. The English, seeing such a human sea rushing upon them, thought the whole world had come together against them. Their senses grew bewildered; some of them beheld St. Aignan, the patron of the town, others the archangel Michael. Glasdale endeavoured to retreat from the rampart to the bastille, across a small bridge; but it was shattered by a shot, and the Englishman fell into the water and was drowned, before the eyes of the maid he had so vilified. There were five hundred men in the bastille, all of whom were put to the sword.

Not one Englishman remained south of the Loire. Next day, Sunday, the besiegers on the northern side abandoned their bastilles, their artillery, their prisoners, and their wounded comrades. Talbot and Suffolk conducted the retreat steadily and in good order. The Maid would not allow them to be pursued, since they retired of their own accord; but before they withdrew out of sight of the town, she had an altar erected on a plain, at which mass was celebrated, and the people returned thanks to God in the presence of the enemy (Sunday, May 8th). The effect of the deliverance of Orleans was prodigious; everyone beheld in it the agency of supernatural power. Many attributed it to the devil, but the majority to God; it began to be generally believed that Charles had right on his side.[c]

Joan of Arc leads the King to Rheims

However discomfited and paralysed by the panic of their soldiers, as well as by the great diminution of their numbers in the siege, the English generals would not retreat from the Loire, but withdrew, Suffolk to Jargeau, up the stream of the river, Talbot to Meung, lower down its current. They were unmolested for a month. The French were lost in jubilation. Joan left Orleans on the 13th of May, and hurried back to the court at Tours to press the king for an army to proceed to Rheims.[d]

To be crowned at Rheims would have been a decisive victory for Charles over his young competitor Henry VI. It would have made him a real king

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of France. But once again the politicians believed themselves the wiser, and the coronation was not to be thought of until the English were driven from the Loire.[b]

Early in June, however, Joan was able to muster eight thousand combatants, of whom twelve hundred were knights, most of them townsmen of Orleans.[g] Suffolk, who had thrown himself into Jargeau, was besieged and the place stormed. Beaugency, too, was taken before Lord Talbot could receive the succours which Sir John Fastolf was bringing him from the regent. The constable De Richemont, who had long kept aloof within his own estates, came, in spite of the king and the Maid, to lend his aid to the victorious army.

A battle was imminent; Richemont came to share the honour it might afford. Talbot and Fastolf had formed a junction of their forces; but it is a curious fact, illustrative both of the condition of the country and of the fortuitous character of the war, that no one knew where to find the English army in the wilderness of La Beauce, which was then covered with coppices and thickets, until they were discovered by a stag, which, being pursued by the French vanguard, rushed into the ranks of the English.

The latter were on their march, and had not set up their defensive line of stakes as usual. Talbot alone was for fighting, furious as he was, since the defeat at Orleans, at having shown his back to the French. Fastolf, on the contrary, who had gained the battle of the Herrings, had no need of an engagement to retrieve his reputation, and said, like a sensible man, that with a disheartened army it was better to remain on the defensive. The French men-at-arms did not wait for the end of the discussion, but charged headlong, and met with no great resistance. Talbot fought with desperate obstinacy, hoping perhaps to be killed, and succeeded only in getting himself made prisoner. The pursuit was murderous; the bodies of two thousand English were strewed over the plain.

After this battle of Patay (28th or 29th of June), it was now or never the time to venture on the expedition to Rheims. The politicians wanted to remain still on the Loire, and make sure of Cosne and La Charité. This time they talked in vain; no timid counsels could now be listened to. Every day brought people flocking in from all the provinces, attracted by the fame of the Maid's miracles, and believing only in her, and in her purpose forthwith to convey the king to Rheims. There was an irresistible outburst of the pilgrim and crusading spirit. The indolent young king himself at last yielded to the popular flood, and suffered himself to be borne along by that vast tide that set in towards the north; and off they started all together, willingly or perforce — the king, courtiers, the politic and the enthusiastic, the madmen and the sages. They were twelve thousand when they began their march, but their numbers augmented continually as they advanced; every hour brought them additional strength; and those who had no armour followed the holy expedition in plain doublets, as archers or sword-and-buckler men, even though they were of gentle blood.

The army marched from Gien on the 28th of June without attempting to enter it, that town being in the hands of the duke of Burgundy, whom there were reasons for treating with favour. Troyes had a mixed garrison of Burgundians and English, who ventured to make a sortie on the first appearance of the royal army. There seemed small chance of storming a large town so well guarded, and that too without artillery. There was only one old Armagnac councillor, the president Macon, who was of a contrary opinion, well knowing that in such an enterprise prudence was on the side

of enthusiasm, and that men must not reason in a popular crusade. "When the king undertook this march," said he, "he did so not by reason of the great armed force or the abundance of money he possessed, nor because the achievement seemed to him possible; he undertook it because Joan told him to advance and be crowned at Rheims, and that he would encounter little resistance by the way, such being the good pleasure of God." The Maid then presented herself at the door of the council-room, and assured them they would be able to enter the town in three days. "We would willingly wait six," said the chancellor, "if we were sure what you say is true." "Six? You shall enter to-morrow!"

She seized her standard; the whole army followed her to the ditch, and they threw into it all they could lay their hands on, fagots, doors, tables, rafters, with such rapidity that the townspeople thought the ditches would very soon disappear altogether. The English began to be dazzled and bewildered as at Orleans, and fancied they sawa cloud of white butterflies fluttering round the magic standard. The citizens on their part were in great dread, recollecting that it was in Troyes the treaty had been concluded which disinherited Charles VII, and fearing that an example would be made of their town. Already they were taking refuge in the churches, and crying out that the town must surrender. The fighting men, who desired nothing better, parleyed and obtained leave to depart with what they had.



A French Knight, Time of Joan of Arc

What they had was chiefly prisoners, Frenchmen. Charles VII's councillors, who had drawn up the capitulation, had stipulated nothing with respect to those unfortunate persons. The Maid alone thought of them. When the English marched out with their prisoners in irons, she stood at the gates and cried out, "In God's name, they shall not carry them off!" She stopped them, in fact, and the king paid their ransom.[c]

Charles simply passed through Troyes, neither did he stop at Châlons, which opened its gates with alacrity; and, on July 13th, he arrived before Rheims. Two Burgundian nobles, the sires of Châtillon and of Saveuse, were in command, but they had no men. They assembled the townsmen, and asked them to hold out for six weeks only; at the end of that time they guaranteed that the dukes of Burgundy and of Bedford would arrive with so powerful an army that it would easily raise the siege. The townsfolk refused to run the risk, persuaded the two captains to retire, and sent a deputation to the chancellor of France who was at the same time archbishop of Rheims, begging him to enter his episcopal town. On July 17th Charles was at last crowned in accordance with the usual ritual, anointed with oil from the holy ampulla of Saint-Rémy and lifted up to his seat by the ecclesiastical peers.

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Joan defeated at Paris (1429 A.D.)

Joan had done the two great things which her 'voices' told her to do: she had delivered Orleans, and had caused the king to be crowned; she now wished to return to her village. "On her entrance into Rheims," says the *Chronique de la Pucelle*,[h] "seeing how all the poor people of the country cried 'Noel!' and wept from joy and gladness, and how they came to the king singing *Te Deum laudamus* without response or anthem, she said to the chancellor of France and to Dunois: 'In God's name this is a good and pious people, and when it shall be my time to die, I should like it to be in this country.'

"Then the said count Dunois asked her: 'Joan, do you know when you will die and in what place?' She answered that that was as God willed; and said moreover to the said lord: 'I have fulfilled what my Lord commanded me, and I wish that he would send me back to my father and mother to keep their sheep and cattle.'"

But her rôle was not ended, for the English still held a large part of the kingdom. Joan, with the same firmness which had made her go to Orleans and to Rheims, asked to be allowed to march to Paris. The king's counsellors could not accustom themselves to these heroic deeds of daring which, at certain moments, are more estimable than prudence; they decided first to take the small towns on the road to Paris. These opened their gates of their own free will. The royal army entered Laon, Soissons, Coulommiers, Provins, Senlis, and St. Denis without trouble. But when they came to Paris the opportunity had passed.[b] Bedford had sent for the duke of Burgundy to secure Paris, and he came at the invitation, but almost alone; all the use the regent could make of him was to have him figure in an assembly of notables, where he harangued, and repeated once more the lamentable history of his father's death. This being done, he took himself off, leaving Bedford, by way of aid, only some Picard men-at-arms; and even for this slight assistance, he required to have the town of Meux given to him in pledge.

There was no hope save in Beaufort. That priest was king in England. His nephew, Gloucester, the protector, had ruined himself by his own follies. In order to uplift the cardinal's power to the highest pitch, it was necessary that Bedford should be brought as low in France as Gloucester was in England; that he should be reduced to such exigency as to call for Beaufort's presence, and that the latter should come at the head of an army to crown Henry VI. That army Beaufort had in readiness. With it he was to secure Paris, convey young Henry thither, and crown him.

It was not until July 25th, nine days after Charles VII had been duly anointed and crowned, that the cardinal entered Paris with his army. Bedford did not lose a moment, but set out with these troops to observe Charles VII. Twice they were in presence of each other, and some skirmishes took place. Bedford, fearing for Normandy, kept watch over it, and during this time the king marched against Paris (August). This was contrary to the wish of the Maid, whose voices told her not to advance beyond St. Denis.

It was an imprudent enterprise; the French nevertheless carried a rampart. The Maid went down into the first ditch, and crossed the shelving bank between it and the second, and found the latter full of water, up to the foot of the wall. Heedless of the arrows, that fell like hail about her, she shouted to her men to bring fascines, and meanwhile sounded the depth of the water with her lance. She was almost alone, a mark for every arrow,

and one passed through her thigh. She strove to bear up against the pain, and remained on the spot to encourage the troops to mount to the assault. At last, having lost much blood, she retired to the cover of the outer ditch, and it was not until ten or eleven at night she could be prevailed on to return to her quarters. She seemed to feel that this decisive check under the very walls of Paris would ruin her beyond recovery.

Fifteen hundred men were wounded in this attack, which she was wrongfully accused of having advised. She was now vilified by her own party as well as by the enemy. She had not scrupled to make the attack on the day of our Lady's Nativity (September 8th), to the great scandal of the pious town of Paris. The court of Charles VII was still more shocked at this irreverent deed. The libertines, the politic ones, the blind worshippers of the letter and sworn foes to the spirit, all declared bravely against the spirit the moment it showed signs of weakness. Negotiations were resolved on, contrary to the Maid's advice, at the instigation of the archbishop of Rheims, chancellor of France, who had never been cordially in her favour. He proceeded to St. Denis, to ask for a truce; perhaps he had secret hopes of prevailing with the duke of Burgundy, who was then in Paris.

Regarded with ill will, and badly supported, the Maid carried on the sieges of St. Pierre le Moûtier and La Charité during the winter. Though almost abandoned before the former, she nevertheless stormed and took it. The siege of La Charité proceeded slowly and languidly; a panic broke out among the besiegers, and they dispersed.

Capture of Joan of Arc (1430 A.D.)

Meanwhile the English had induced the duke of Burgundy to give them effectual aid. The weaker they were, the more hope he had of being able to retain the strongholds he might take in Picardy. The English, who had just lost Louviers, offered him his own terms, and he, the richest prince in Christendom, no longer hesitated to stake men and money in a war, the profit of which he hoped to appropriate. A bribe to the governor put him in possession of Soissons. Then he laid siege to Compiègne, the governor of which was also a man of very questionable integrity; but the inhabitants were too strongly committed to the cause of Charles VII to let their town be given up. The Maid threw herself into it, and on the very same day made a sortie in which she nearly surprised the besiegers. But the latter rallied in a moment, and pressed hotly upon the besieged, up to the rampart and the bridge. The Maid, having remained in the rear to cover the retreat, was not able to get within the walls in time — whether it was that the bridge was blocked up by the crowd, or that the gates were already closed. Being identified by her costume, she was soon surrounded, seized, and dragged from her horse. Her capturer, a Picard archer, brought her to his master, the bastard of Wandomme, who sold her to John of Ligny, who belonged to the illustrious house of Luxemburg and was the duke of Burgundy's vassal.[c]

Now this John of Luxemburg had need of the duke of Burgundy in order to inherit peacefully the domains of Ligny and St. Pol, to the detriment of his elder brother. The duke of Burgundy, in order not to be disturbed when seizing Brabant, Brussels, and Louvain, in spite of the rights of his aunt Margaret, needed the assistance of the English. The English were inclined to allow anything provided Joan of Arc was given up to

[1430-1431 A.D.]

them.[b] It was absolutely necessary to get her out of the hands of the Burgundians. She had been taken on the 23rd of May; on the 26th a message was sent from Rouen in the name of the vicar of the Inquisition summoning John of Ligny to give up the woman, she being suspected of witchcraft.[c] A violent tempered man, a Burgundian, who was willing to do anything in the hope of obtaining the archbishopric of Rouen, Pierre Cauchon, bishop of Beauvais, undertook to prove it by a trial in due form.[b]

The university stepped forward, and wrote to the duke of Burgundy and to John of Ligny (July 14th). Cauchon, in his exceeding zeal making himself the agent and courier of the English, carried the letter with his own hands to the two dukes. At the same time he summoned them as a bishop to deliver over to him a prisoner over whom he had jurisdiction. In this strange proceeding, we find him pass from the part of a judge to that of a negotiator, and make offers of money; though the woman in question cannot be considered a prisoner of war, the king of England will give John of Ligny and the bastard of Wandomme 200 or 300 livres' yearly rent, and a sum of 6,000 livres to those in whose keeping she is. Towards the end of the letter he advances as far as 10,000 livres, "as much," he says, "as would be given for a king or a prince according to the custom of France."

Thus on all sides that world of interest and covetousness was opposed to the Maid, or at least indifferent as to her fate. The good Charles VII did nothing for her, the good Duke Philip gave her up to her mortal foes. It was in vain John of Ligny's wife threw herself at his feet, and implored him not to dishonour himself.[1] He was not free; he had already received English money, and he gave up Joan, not directly indeed to the English, but to the duke of Burgundy, who took her to Arras, and then to the keep of Crotoy.

Compiègne was delivered on the 1st of November. The duke of Burgundy had advanced as far as Noyon, as though it were to meet the disgraceful blow more nearly and in person. He was again defeated shortly afterwards at Germigny (November 20th). At Péronne Saintrailles offered him battle, but he durst not accept it. These humiliations no doubt confirmed the duke in his alliance with the English, and fixed his determination to give up the Maid to them.

At the moment when the English had the Maid at last in their hands,[2] and could begin her trial, their affairs were in a very bad condition. Far from having recovered Louviers, they had lost Château Gaillard; La Hire, who took it by escalade, found Barbazan a prisoner there, and let loose that redoubtable captain. The towns were going over of their own accord to the side of Charles VII, and the citizens were driving out the English. The men of Melun, so close to Paris, ejected their garrison.

The rapid downhill course of English affairs was only to be checked by some strong machinery, and such had Beaufort ready in the trial and the coronation of Henry VI. The latter entered Paris on the 2nd of December. The university had been made to write on the 21st of November to Cauchon, accusing him of tardiness, and requesting the king to begin the trial. Cauchon was in no hurry, thinking it hard, apparently, to begin the work, whilst the payment was as yet uncertain. It was not until a month later that he obtained authority from the chapter of Rouen to proceed in that diocese. He opened the proceedings at Rouen, on the 9th of January, 1431.[c]

[1 His aunt, the saintly Joan of Luxemburg, was also most energetic in her efforts to have Joan released.]

[2 The count of Ligny received the money before October. The duke of Burgundy handed Joan over to the English on the 21st of November.]

Trial of Joan of Arc

He based the accusation on the four following points: infringement of the laws of the church, by making use of magic practices; by taking up arms, contrary to her parents' wishes; by wearing clothes which were not those of her sex; and lastly, by announcing revelations which were not sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority. Thus a poor girl of nineteen was alone, without protection against judges who were sold to her enemies, who arbitrarily suppressed every proof of her innocence, who prevented her appealing to the pope or to the council, who sought to embarrass her by absurd and misleading questions or by extremely delicate ones, and who were often disconcerted by her heroic replies.

The maid was finally brought before her judges on the 21st of February. "J n," they asked her, "do you believe you have found salvation?" "If I have not, may God grant it me; if I have, may God preserve me in it!" "Did you not say that standards made by the soldiers in imitation of yours would bring them good luck?" "No; I only said, 'advance boldly among the English,' and I advanced also." But she declared that she had never killed anyone. "Why was her standard carried to the church at Rheims at the coronation, more than those of the other captains?" "It had borne the burden, it was only just that it should receive the honour." "What was the idea of those people who kissed your hands, your feet, your clothes?" "The poor people came to me gladly, because I did them no ill; I supported them and defended them to the best of my power." "Do you think you were right to leave without permission from your mother and father? Ought one not to honour one's father and mother?" "They have forgiven me." "Did you not think you were sinning in acting in this manner?" "God commanded it; if I had had one hundred fathers and one hundred mothers I should have gone." "Do you think your king did right in killing or having killed Monseigneur of Burgundy?" "It was a great pity for the kingdom of France. But, whatever may have been between them, God sent me to help the king of France." "Do St. Catherine and St. Margaret hate the English?" "They love what our Lord loves, and hate what he hates." "Does God hate the English?" "I know nothing of the love or hatred which God has for the English; but I know well that they will be driven from France, except those who perish here." "Is it not a mortal sin to admit a man to ransom and then put him to death?" "I have not done so."



COSTUME OF A FRENCH PEASANT, AT THE TIME OF JOAN OF ARC

The judges laid stress on the man's clothing which Joan had assumed contrary to the laws of the church, which she was still wearing, and which she

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would not relinquish. The wretches affected not to understand what the poor girl did not dare to tell them — that in camp, even in prison, this dress had been, and still was, her protection.[b]

The Twelve Articles

Between the 2nd and 4th of April the judges, on the advice of the members of the university, caused the seventy points of accusation brought forward by the prosecutor to be summed up in twelve articles. There were two doctors of Paris, Nicholas Midi and Jacques de Touraine, who worked on this — one on the plan, the other on the final form. The twelve articles reviewed the trial in a spirit very hostile to Joan, while it eliminated the prosecutor's accusation of impostures and brutalities. On the 12th of April twenty-two doctors and licentiates deliberated together on the twelve articles. They left the question hanging between a matter of human invention and an inspiration of Satan.[f]

We give herewith these twelve articles and follow them with the findings of the faculty, as they are given in the report of the trial, edited by M. Quicherat.[i]

I. And in the first place, a certain woman states and affirms that, when she was thirteen years of age or thereabouts, she herself saw, with her own corporeal eyes, St. Michael consoling her, and sometimes St. Gabriel appearing in bodily form; sometimes, also, she saw a great multitude of angels: and afterwards, SS. Catherine and Margaret showed themselves visible in bodily form to the same woman, and she also sees them daily and hears their voices, and has embraced them at times, and kissed them, touching them sensibly and corporeally. She truly saw the heads of the said angels and saints, but concerning their other parts or their garments she was unwilling to say anything. And that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret sometimes spoke to her at a certain spring near a large tree, commonly called "the fairies' tree,"[1] concerning which spring and tree there was a common report that the "fates of the ladies" frequent there, and that many fever-stricken persons go to the said spring and tree for the sake of recovering health, although they are situated in a profane place. These she frequently worshipped there and elsewhere and paid them reverence.

She says, moreover, that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret appear and show themselves to her crowned with very beautiful and costly crowns, and from the aforesaid time and ofttimes subsequently spoke to the same woman concerning the command of God, that it behoved her to go to a certain secular prince promising that by the help of the same woman and by her labours the said prince would recover by force of arms great temporal dominion and worldly honour, would obtain victory over his enemies, and that the same prince would receive the said woman and would bestow on her arms together with an army of soldiers for the carrying out of what was promised. Furthermore, the said SS. Catherine and Margaret instructed the same woman concerning the command of God, that she should assume and wear male attire, which she has worn and still wears in persevering obedience to this

[1 From the door of her father's dwelling she looked on an old oak wood. The fairies haunted that wood; their favourite spot was a certain spring near a great ash called the "fairies' tree." The children used to hang garlands on it and sing to it. These somewhile ladies and mistresses of the forest could no longer, it was said, assemble at the spring; they had been excluded from it for their sins. The church, however, always retained a jealous fear of the old local divinities, and the curé used to go once every year, and read a mass at the spring, in order to drive them away.*c*]

kind of command insomuch that the woman herself has said that she would rather die than abandon this kind of dress, saying this simply at different times, and occasionally "unless it were the command of God." She even chose rather not to be present at the offices of mass and to go without the holy communion of the Eucharist at times ordained by the church for receiving the sacrament, than to resume female and put off male attire. They were also protectors of the said woman in this matter that, without the knowledge and against the will of her parents, when she was seventeen years of age or thereabouts, she left her father's house and associated with a number of soldiers, frequenting with them by day and by night, never or rarely having another woman with her. And many other things did the said saints tell and teach the same woman, by reason of which she says that she has been sent by the God of heaven and by the victorious church of the saints now enjoying beatitude to whom she commits all her good deeds.

She declines, however, and refuses to submit her deeds and words to the church militant, having been ofttimes required and admonished concerning this; saying that it is impossible for the same woman to act contrary to those things which she affirmed in her process, that she had acted by the command of God, nor would she render account concerning these things to the conclusion or judgment of anyone living, but only to the judgment of God; and that they revealed to the same woman that she herself will be saved in the glory of the blessed ones and she would attain the salvation of her soul if she should keep her virginity, which she vowed to them on the first occasion when she saw and heard them. By the occasion of which revelation she asserts that she is as certain of her own salvation in the kingdom of heaven as if it were already a present fact.

II. Further, the said woman declares that the sign which the prince had to whom she was sent, and by which he was influenced to believe her concerning her revelations and to receive her for the purpose of carrying on war, was that St. Michael came to the same prince accompanied by a multitude of angels of whom some had crowns and others had wings, with whom were SS. Catherine and Margaret. This angel and the woman were walking above the earth along a way like unto steps and an arch stretching a great way, other angels and the aforesaid saints accompanying them; and a certain angel delivered to the same prince a very costly crown of purest gold and the said angel bowed himself before the said prince showing him reverence. On one occasion she said that, when her prince had the sign given him, she herself thought that he was then alone although several others were near enough at hand; and on another occasion that, as she believes, one archbishop received that sign of a crown and delivered it to the aforesaid prince, several temporal lords being present, witnessing it.

III. Further, the aforesaid woman knew and was assured that he who visits her is St. Michael, by the good advice, comfort, and good doctrine which the aforesaid St. Michael gave and made for the same woman; and in that he named himself, saying that he himself was Michael. And similarly she knows St. Catherine and St. Margaret distinctly from each other through this — that they name themselves and salute her. On account of which things, concerning the appearance of St. Michael to her, she believes that he is St. Michael himself, and she believes that the words and deeds of that Michael are true and good as firmly as she believes that our Lord Jesus suffered and died for our redemption.

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IV. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that she herself is certain concerning certain future things that are wholly coming to pass, and will happen, just as she is certain about those things which she indeed sees done before her; and boasts that she has and has had information concerning certain hidden things by means of revelations as far as the meaning of the word extends through the voices of St. Catherine and St. Margaret — namely, that she will be liberated from prison and that the French will do a fairer deed in her company than was ever done for the whole of Christianity; that, furthermore, she has recognised by means of revelation, as she says, some men whom she had never seen before without anyone pointing them out to her, and that she has revealed and discovered a certain sword which was hidden in the earth.

V. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that according to the command of God and that which is well pleasing to him she has assumed and worn and continually wears and clothes herself with a dress after the fashion of a man. And further, she declares that from the time that she held it to be the command of God to take male dress, it behoved her to get a short tunic, a hood, a jerkin, breeches, and boots with many tags, the hair of her head being cut off round over the tops of her ears, leaving nothing upon her body which represented or pointed out the feminine sex beyond those things which nature conferred on the same woman for the distinction of the feminine sex. And that she ofttimes received the Eucharist when wearing the aforesaid dress. She neither has wished nor does she wish to resume feminine attire. Having been ofttimes lovingly questioned and admonished about this, she has said that she would rather die than leave off male attire, sometimes simply saying so, and sometimes, "unless it were by God's command." And that if she were in male attire among those for whose sake she at other times armed herself and did as she used to do before her capture and detention, this would be one of the greatest benefits which could happen for the whole kingdom of France; adding that for nothing in the world would she take an oath of not wearing male attire and not arming herself, and in all aforesaid she declares that she has done and does do well in obeying God and his commands.

VI. Further, the said woman confesses and asserts that she has caused to be written many letters in some of which on the one hand these names, Jesus Maria, were added together with the sign of the cross, and at times she superadded a cross, and then she was unwilling that that should be done which she ordered to be done in her letters. In other letters, on the other hand, she caused to be written that she herself would have those put to death who were not obedient to her letters or her counsels and that "it will immediately be seen who has the greater authority from the God of heaven"; and she frequently declares that she has done nothing except by the revelation and commandment of God.

VII. Further, the said woman declares and confesses that when she was seventeen years of age or thereabouts, she went of her own accord and by revelation according as she says to a certain esquire whom she had never seen, before leaving her father's house against the wish of her parents; who, as soon as they were aware of her departure, were almost out of their mind. The said woman requested indeed this esquire that he should lead her or cause her to be led to the prince of whom it has been before spoken. And then the

said gentleman, a captain, delivered to the said woman a man's dress together with a sword at the request of the woman herself, and deputed and ordered one soldier, one esquire, and four serving men to conduct her; who when they had come to the aforesaid prince the said woman said to the same prince that she herself wished to head the war against his enemies, promising that she would place him in great power and would overcome his enemies; and that she had been sent for this purpose by the God of heaven, saying that in the aforesaid she did well by the command of God and by revelation.

VIII. Further, the said woman declares and confesses that she, no one forcing or compelling her, threw herself down from a certain very lofty tower, preferring rather to die than to be delivered into the hands of her enemies, or than to live after the destruction of the city of Compendium (Compiègne); she declares too that she could not avoid this kind of fall and yet that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret prevented her from casting herself down, to offend whom she declares is a great sin. Yet she knows well that this kind of sin has been forgiven her after she has made confession of it. And concerning this she declares that she has had a revelation.

IX. Further, the said woman declares that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret promised her that they themselves would lead her into paradise if she kept well the virginity which she vowed to them both in body and in soul. And concerning this she declares she is as certain as if she were already in the glory of the blessed ones. Nor does she think she has committed works of mortal sin; for if she were in mortal sin, it seems to her that the aforesaid SS. Catherine and Margaret would not visit her as they daily do visit her.

X. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that God loves certain men determined and named hitherto travellers, and loves them more than he does the same woman. And she knows this through the revelation of the SS. Catherine and Margaret who speak to her frequently in French, and not in English, since they are not on their side. And since she has known by revelation that their voices were on behalf of the prince above mentioned, she has not loved the Burgundians.

XI. Further, the said woman declares and affirms that she has oft-times shown reverence to the aforesaid voices and spirits whom she calls Michael, Gabriel, Catherine, and Margaret, by uncovering the head, bending her knee, kissing the earth over which they walked, and by vowing to them virginity and at times by embracing and kissing the same Catherine and Margaret; and that she has touched them corporeally and sensibly, and has besought of them counsel and help by invoking them at times, although they frequently visit her when not invoked, and she acquiesces in and obeys their counsels and commands and has acquiesced from the beginning without seeking advice from anyone, for example, from father or mother, curate, or prelate, or any other ecclesiastic. And nevertheless she firmly believes that the voices and revelations which she has had through male and female saints of this sort come from God and by his ordering, and she believes this as firmly as she believes the Christian faith and that our Lord Jesus Christ suffered death for us; adding that if an evil spirit appeared to her, who pretended that he was St. Michael, she would know well how to distinguish whether he were St. Michael or not. The same woman also declares that at her own request, no other person compelling or requiring it of her, she

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swore to the SS. Catherine and Margaret, who appeared to her, that she would not reveal the sign of the crown which was to be given to the prince to whom she was sent. And in conclusion she said that "unless she had license to reveal it."

XII. Further, the said woman declares and confesses that if the church should wish that she should do anything contrary to the command which she declares has been given her by God she would not do that for anything, affirming that she knows well that those things which are contained in her process come by the commandment of God, and that it were impossible for her to do anything contrary to them. Nor was she willing to refer, concerning these things, to the judgment of the church militant or to any man in the world, but to one Lord God alone, whose commands she will always do; especially as to the subject-matter of the revelations and those things which she declares she has done by revelation. And she declares that she has not made this answer and other answers of herself alone, but she has made and given these answers by command of the voices and revelations made to her; although the article of faith, "one holy Catholic church," was ofttimes explained to the said woman by judges and others there present, explaining to her that every faithful pilgrim is bound to obey and to submit his deeds and words to the church militant, especially in the matter of faith and that which touches holy doctrine and ecclesiastical sanctions.

The Findings of the Faculty

I. And in the first place as to the first article, the faculty declares by means of doctrine that the manner and matter of the revelations, the quality of the person and place, together with other circumstances, having been finally considered, they are either fictitious lies, seductive and pernicious, or the aforesaid apparitions and revelations are superstitions, proceeding from malignant and diabolical spirits, Belial, Satan, and Behemoth.

II. Further, as to the second article, that that which it contains does not seem true; yea, the latter is a presumptuous lie, seductive, pernicious, fictitious, and derogatory to the dignity of angels.

III. Further, as to the third article, that the signs contained in it are not sufficient and the said woman believes lightly and asserts easily. Furthermore in the statement which she makes she believes wrongly, and errs in the faith.

IV. Further, as to the fourth article, that in it is contained a superstition, a soothsaying and presumptuous assertion, together with empty boasting.

V. Further, as to the fifth article, that the said woman is blasphemous towards God and a despiser of God in his sacraments; a prevaricator of divine law and holy doctrine and of ecclesiastical sanctions; of evil wisdom, she errs from the faith and is an empty boaster, and is to be held suspected of idolatry and the curse of herself and of her garments by imitating the custom of the Gentiles.

VI. Further, as to the sixth article, that the said woman is a traitress, crafty, cruel, and thirsting after the shedding of human blood, seditious

and provoking to tyranny; a blasphemer of God in his commands and revelations.

VII. Further, as to the seventh article, that the said woman is undutiful to her parents, a prevaricator of the precept concerning honouring parents; scandalous, blasphemous towards God, and errs in the faith and makes a rash and presumptuous promise.

VIII. Further, that in the eighth article is contained weakness of mind tending to despair, that is to say, to suicide and to presumptuous and rash assertion concerning the pardon of sin held out; and that the said woman has an evil opinion of the freedom of human judgment.

IX. Further, that in the ninth article is contained a presumptuous and rash assertion and a pernicious lie, and she contradicts herself in the preceding article and has an ill knowledge of the faith.

X. Further, that in the tenth article is contained a presumptuous and rash assertion, superstitious divination, blasphemy against SS. Catherine and Margaret, and transgression of the precept concerning the love of your neighbour.

XI. Further, as to the eleventh article, that the said woman, supposing that she had the revelations and apparitions of which she boasts with certain beings according to the first article, is an idolatress, an invoker of demons, and errs in the faith, asserts rashly, and has made an unlawful oath.

XII. Further, as to the twelfth article, that the said woman is a schismatic, having an evil opinion of the unity and authority of the church; an apostate and hitherto errs obstinately in the faith.

Here follows a deliberation and determination by manner of doctrine of the Venerable Faculty of degrees in the University of Paris upon the twelve articles concerning the words and deeds of Joan, commonly called La Pucelle, above annotated and described; which deliberation and determination the said faculty submits to the order and judgment of the great pontiff of the holy apostolic seat and of the holy general council. If the said woman being of right mind obstinately affirm the propositions declared in the above written twelve articles and in performance abide by the deeds contained in the same, it seems to the faculty of degrees, having diligently examined the aforesaid propositions, speaking in love by manner of council or doctrine:

I. That the said woman has become schismatic, since schism is unlawful division, through her disobedience from the unity of the church, and separates herself from the obedience of the church militant, in that she says, etc.

II. Further, that the woman herself errs in the faith: contradicts the article of faith contained in the lesser symbol "one holy Catholic church"; and, as says St. Jerome, by contradicting this article she acknowledges herself not only unskilful, malevolent, and uncatholic, but heretical.

III. Further, that the woman herself is also even apostate, both because with an evil purpose she caused to be cut off from her the hair which God

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gave her for a covering ; and also because, for the same purpose having given up female dress, she imitated the dress of men.

IV. Further, that the woman herself is a liar and a soothsayer when she says that she was sent by God and spoke with the angels and saints and did not make it known by the operation of a miracle or special witness of Scripture ; as when the Lord wished to send Moses into Egypt to the children of Israel, in order that they might believe that he was sent by him he gave them a sign that he should turn his rod into a serpent and the serpent into a rod again ; that John the Baptist also should reform them, he brought forward a special testimony of his mission from Scripture, saying : "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness ; make straight the way of the Lord, as saith the prophet Esaias."

V. Further, that the same woman, by her presumption of authority, and concerning right, errs in the faith both firstly, since she herself is anathema by canonical authority and has continued in the same state for a long time ; and secondly, because she says she would rather not receive the body of Christ and not make her confession at the time appointed by the church than put off her male attire and resume the dress of women ; she is therefore most vehemently suspected of heresy, and is to be diligently examined concerning the articles of faith.

VI. Further, the same woman also errs in that she says that she is as certain that she will be led into paradise as if she were already in the glory of the blessed ones ; since, in this journey, whether the traveller be worthy of praise or tribulation is unknown but is recognised by the supreme Judge alone. Wherefore, if the aforesaid woman be charitably exhorted and duly admonished by a competent judge to return of her own will to the unity of the Catholic faith and publicly to abjure her errors at the will of the aforesaid judge, and be unwilling to show suitable satisfaction, she is to be abandoned to the power of the secular judge under obligation to receive vengeance in proportion to the quality of her crime.[a]

The Sentence and its Execution

Her condemnation was decided beforehand ; but they wanted to obtain from her some words implicating Charles VII, and they employed all means for this purpose ; they sent for the executioner to come to the prison ; then they said that all was ready for the torture. She was very ill during holy week. Threats had little effect on this heroic mind ; they resorted to promises, to the most pernicious for her — that of being taken from the hands of her English gaolers and given over to men of the church. She yielded, and signed the recantation which was presented to her, without even knowing what it contained : and then, out of mercy and moderation, she was only condemned to spend the rest of her days in prison, on the bread of affliction and water of sorrow, to weep over her sins.[b]

She was admitted by the ecclesiastical judge to do penance, nowhere else of course than in the church prisons. The ecclesiastical *in pace*, hard as it was, would at least take her out of the hands of the English, protect her from their insults, and save her honour. What were her surprise and horror when the bishop said coldly, "Take her back to the place whence you brought her !"

Nothing was done; thus deceived, she could not fail to retract her retraction. But even had she been willing to persist in it, the rage of the English would not have allowed her. They had come to St. Ouen, where the sentence had been delivered, in hopes at last to burn the witch; they waited in breathless expectation; and were they now to be sent off in this way, with nothing for their pains but a scrap of parchment, a signature, and a grimace? At the moment when the bishop suspended the reading of the sentence, stones flew about the platforms without respect for the cardinal. The doctors were in danger of their lives when they set foot on the ground; bare swords were everywhere pointed at their throats; the most moderate of the English confined themselves to insulting words: "Priest, you do not earn the king's money." The trembling doctors, shuffling away as fast as they could, said, "Be not uneasy, we shall surely catch her again." It was not merely the common soldiers, the English mob, that showed this thirst for blood. The respectable people and the lords were not less rancorous. The king's man and his tutor, Lord Warwick, said, like the soldiers, "The king fares badly; the girl will not be burned" (May 23rd, 1431).



A French Knight, Time of Joan of Arc

The poor girl, exposed to such danger, had hitherto possessed no other defence than her male attire; but strange to say, no one had ever chosen to understand why she wore it. Her friends and her enemies were alike shocked at her doing so. In the beginning she had been obliged to explain herself to the women of Poitiers. After her capture, when she was in the custody of the ladies of Luxemburg,[1] those good dames begged her to dress as became a decent girl. If the women understood nothing of this female question, how much less did the priests! They quoted the text of a council of the fourth century, which anathematises this exchange of garments. They did not perceive that this prohibition applied especially to an epoch which had scarcely emerged from pagan impurity.

On Friday and Saturday the unfortunate prisoner, deprived of her male attire, had much to fear. According to the statement of her confessor, to whom she revealed the fact, an Englishman, not a soldier, but a gentleman, a lord, bravely undertook to violate a chained girl and, failing in the attempt, loaded her with blows.

"When the morning of Trinity Sunday was come, and it was time for her to rise (as she has related to him who speaks) she said to the English, her guards, 'Un-iron me that I may rise.' One of them took off the woman's garments that were on her, emptied the bag in which was the male dress, and said to her, 'Get up.' 'Sirs,' said she, 'you know it is forbidden me; certainly I will not take it.' This dispute lasted until noon, and at last, by

[1 The mother and aunt of the count of Ligny, who took a tender interest in the Maid while she was in his keeping.]

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reason of bodily necessity, she was obliged to go out and take that dress. On her return, they would not give her any other, notwithstanding all her supplications."

In reality, it was not for the interest of the English that she should resume the garb of a man, and thus annul the retractation so laboriously obtained; but at that moment their rage knew no bounds. Saintrailles had just made a bold attempt on Rouen. It would have been a fine exploit to seize the judges on their bench, and carry off Beaufort and Bedford to Poitiers. The latter had another narrow escape of being captured on his return between Rouen and Paris. There was no safety for the English so long as that infernal girl lived, who was doubtless continuing her diabolical arts in prison. It was necessary she should die.

The assessors being instantly sent for to the castle to see the change of dress, found in the courtyard some hundred English, who stopped their way. Thinking that if these doctors entered, they might spoil all, they brandished axes and swords in their faces, and drove them out, calling them Armagnac traitors. Cauchon, getting in with great difficulty, assumed a gay air to please Warwick, and said, laughing, "She is caught." On Monday he returned with the inquisitor and eight assessors to interrogate the Maid, and ask her why she had resumed that garb. She offered no excuse, but bravely accepting her danger said that this dress suited her better so long as she should be guarded by men; that moreover, word had not been kept with her. Her saints had said to her that it was great pity to have abjured to save her life. At the same time she did not refuse to put on female garments again. "Let me be consigned to a mild and safe prison," she said, "I will be good and do all the church shall desire."

On Tuesday the judges got together, at the archiepiscopal palace, some sort of an assemblage of assessors, some of whom had been present only at the first sittings, and the rest at none; they were men of every kind — priests, lawyers, and three were even physicians. The judges reported to them what had taken place, and asked their opinions. The opinion they gave, very different from what was expected, was that the prisoner ought to be brought again into court and have her act of abjuration read again to her. It is doubtful that this was within the power of the judges. Judge or judgment was in fact no longer a thing possible amidst naked swords and raging soldiers. Bloodshed was inevitable; the judges perhaps were not far from seeing their own spilt. They drew up a hasty citation to be served the next morning at eight; her next appearance was only to be for the purpose of being burned.

In the morning, Cauchon sent her a confessor, Brother Martin l'Advenu, "to announce death to her and induce her to penitence. And when he announced to the poor girl the death she was to die that day, she began to cry out woefully, sinking with faintness, and tearing her hair. 'Alas! am I to be treated so horribly and cruelly, and must my body, whole and entire, which was never corrupted, be now consumed and reduced to ashes? Oh! oh! I would rather be beheaded seven times than be thus burned! Oh! I appeal to God, the great Judge of the wrongs and grievances they do me!'"

At nine she was dressed in women's clothes and placed on a car, with Friar Martin l'Advenu on one side of her, and the *huissier* Massieu on the other. Isambart, the Augustine monk, who had already displayed so much charity and courage, would not quit her. The Maid had never despaired until now. Even whilst saying, as she did at times, "the English will put me to death," she did not in reality believe it. She did not imagine

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she could ever be forsaken. She had faith in her king, and in the good people of France. She had said expressly, "There will be in the prison or at the condemnation some tumult by which I shall be delivered — delivered with great victory!" But though the king and the people should fail her, she had another aid, far more potent and sure — that of her friends on high, the good and precious saints. What then were her thoughts when she saw that she was really to die — when, mounted on the cart, she passed along through the trembling crowd, guarded by eight hundred Englishmen armed with lances and swords? She wept and bewailed her fate, but never accused either her king or her saints. But one phrase escaped her lips, "O Rouen, Rouen, must I die here!"

The end of this dismal journey was the Vieux Marché, the fish market. Three platforms had been erected there. On one was the episcopal and royal chair, the throne of the cardinal of England, surrounded by the seats of his prelates; the other was destined for the performers in this melancholy drama, the preacher, the judges, and the bailiff, and lastly the culprit. Some way off from these was seen a great platform in plaster filled and heaped with wood; materials had not been spared upon the pile: it struck terror by its height. This was done not merely for the purpose of rendering the execution more solemn; there was another intention — namely, that the great height of the pile should make it inaccessible to the executioner except from below, where he was to light it, and thus prevent him from abridging the sufferer's agony and despatching her, as usual, before the flames reached her. There was no thought here of defrauding justice and giving a dead body to the fire; it was meant that she should be literally and truly burned alive, and that placed on the summit of that mound of wood she should be visible above the circle of lances and swords to every spectator on the ground. Burning slowly before the eyes of a gaping multitude there was reason to expect that she would at last yield to some weakness, and utter something that might be given out as a recantation; at the very least it was probable that some incoherent words would escape her, which might be interpreted as her judges desired; perhaps that in womanly terror and despair she would descend to ignoble prayers and cries for mercy.

The hideous ceremony began with a sermon. Master Nicholas Midi, one of the lights of the University of Paris, preached from this edifying text: "When a member of the church is sick the whole church is sick." That poor church could only be cured by cutting off a limb. He concluded with the formal phrase: "Joan, go in peace; the church can no longer defend thee."

Then the ecclesiastical judge, the bishop of Beauvais, benignly exhorted her to think of her soul and to recollect all her misdeeds, that she might be moved to contrition. The assessors had decided that it was incumbent in law to read her abjuration to her again; but the bishop did not do so, fearing that she would contradict and remonstrate. But the poor girl had no thought of thus battling with lawyers' subtleties for her life; her mind was far differently engaged. Before even she had been exhorted to contrition she was on her knees invoking God, the Virgin, St. Michael, and St. Catherine, pardoning all and asking pardon, and saying to the by-standers, "Pray for me." She particularly requested each of the priests to say a mass for her soul; and all this she did in a manner so pious, humble, and affecting, that the emotion spread from man to man, and none present could restrain their feelings; the bishop of Beauvais wept, the bishop of Boulogne sobbed, and at last the English themselves shed tears, and Beaufort as well as the rest.

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The judges soon recovered from their momentary fit of humanity, and the bishop of Beauvais, wiping his eyes, began to read the sentence. He recapitulated to the culprit all her crimes, schism, idolatry, invocation of fiends, and set forth how she had been admitted to repentance, and how, "seduced by the prince of lies, she had relapsed, O grief! as a dog returns to his vomit. Therefore we pronounce you a rotten member, and as such cut off from the church. We give you over to the secular power, entreating it at the same time to moderate its sentence, and to spare you the pain of death and mutilation of your limbs."[1]

Thus abandoned by the church she cast herself in full confidence on God. She asked for the cross. An Englishman handed her a wooden cross which he had made out of a stick; she received it not the less piously, kissed it, and put that rough emblem of salvation under her clothes next her skin. But she would rather have had the church cross to keep before her eyes until death. The good *huissier* Massieu and Brother Isambart exerted themselves to fulfil her wishes, and the cross was brought her from the parish of St. Sauveur. While she was embracing it, and Isambart was exhorting her, the English began to think the business very tedious; it was noon at least; the soldiers grumbled, and the captains called out, "Holla, priest! are you going to keep us here to dinner?" Then losing patience and not waiting for the order of the bailiff, though he alone had authority to send her to death, they sent up two sergeants to take her out of the hands of the priests. She was seized at the foot of the tribunal by the soldiers, who dragged her to the executioner, and said to him, "Do thy office." This fury of the soldiery excited horror; many of the by-standers, and even of the judges, rushed from the ground to avoid seeing any more of it.

When she was on the ground among those English who laid hands on her, nature gave way and the flesh was troubled. Again she cried, "O Rouen, thou art then to be my last abode!" She said no more and sinned not with her lips, even in that awful moment. She accused not her king or her saints. But when she was on the top of the pile, and saw that great town and that motionless and silent multitude, she could not help saying, "Ah, Rouen, Rouen, I fear me much thou wilt have to suffer for my death!" Wonderful gentleness of soul! she who had saved the people, and whom the people forsook, expressed but compassion for them in her dying moments.

She was bound beneath the infamous inscription, and on her head was placed a mitre, on which was written: "Heretic, relapsed, apostate, idolator." Then the executioner applied the fire. She saw it from above and shrieked. The monk who was exhorting her did not pay attention to the flames; and she, forgetting herself, became alarmed for him and made him go down. What plainly proves that until then she had retracted nothing expressly is that the wretched Cauchon was obliged (doubtless by the imperious Satanic will of him that presided) to approach the foot of the pile, obliged to look his victim in the face, and try to elicit something from her. She repeated to him mildly what she had already said: "Bishop, I die by you. Had you placed me in the church prisons this would not have happened." Of course it had been expected that, thinking herself abandoned by her king, she would at last accuse him and speak against him; but she defended him still: "Whether I have done well or done ill, my king is in no wise implicated therein: it was not he who advised me."

[1 The regular formula for the sentence of giving over a heretic to the secular arm.]

Meanwhile, the flames were ascending. At the moment they reached her the poor creature started and called out for holy water; this apparently was a cry of terror. But immediately collecting herself she uttered no names but those of God, her angels, and her saints. She testified her faith in them: "Yes, my voices were of God; my voices have not deceived me!" That grand expression of hers is attested by the compulsory and sworn witness of her death, the Dominican who ascended the pile with her, whom she sent down from that dangerous post, but who continued speaking with her from below, listened to her words, and held up the cross to her sight.

We have yet another witness of this holy death, a witness of very grave character, who was himself doubtless a saint. This man, whose name history ought to preserve, was the Augustine monk already mentioned, Brother Isambart de la Pierre. He was near perishing in the course of the prosecution for having given counsel to the Maid, and yet though so conspicuously obnoxious to the English, he voluntarily ascended the cart with her, procured her the parish cross, and stood by her in the midst of the furious crowd, both on the platform and at the stake. Twenty years after the event the two venerable men, humble monks, devoted to poverty and with nothing to gain or to fear in this world, depose as follows: "We heard her in the fire invoking her saints and her archangel; she repeated the Saviour's name. At last, dropping her head, she cried aloud, 'Jesus.'"

"Ten thousand men wept." Some English alone laughed or tried to laugh. One of the most violent among them had sworn to fling a fagot on the pile; she was expiring at the moment he deposited it, and he was taken ill. His comrades carried him off to a tavern to revive his spirits with drink, but he could not recover his equanimity. "I saw," he cried distractedly, "I saw a dove escape from her mouth with her last sigh." Others had read in the flames the word Jesus which she repeated. The executioner went that evening in utter dismay to Brother Isambart, and confessed, but could not believe that God would ever forgive him. One of the king of England's secretaries said openly as he returned from the horrid scene, "We are undone; we have burned a saint!" [c]

THE REHABILITATION OF JOAN OF ARC (1456 A.D.)

For a long time the people refused to believe in Joan's death.[1] The memory of her who had been both the heroine and victim of patriotic and national sentiment became more and more popular, and several years after the English had been driven from France and her predictions accomplished, there arose a desire that her memory should be avenged.

When Charles VII entered Rouen in 1450 he had ordered the revision of the trial. Cardinal Estouteville, archbishop of Rouen and papal legate, began investigation in the name of the church. But for political reasons, and so as not to irritate the English, it was judged better to have the request for rehabilitation come from Joan's own family, as a private matter. Two doctors designated by the court of Rome examined the request, declared it founded on the most serious motives, and concluded if the church must hesitate to

[1 In 1436 rumour spread through France that it was not La Pucelle that the English had burned at Rouen. In fact, a woman whose resemblance to Joan was astonishing had presented herself to her two brothers and was acknowledged by them. In 1438 and 1439 this "false Joan" headed a body of armed men and was enthusiastically received by the people of Orleans. Brought before the king, she admitted the imposture, was imprisoned, afterwards released and came, according to report, to a bad and shameful end.]

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pronounce on Joan's visions, it could not charge them with crime. Upon these conclusions Pope Calixtus III appointed three prelates and an inquisitor to form a court of revision over which the archbishop of Rheims presided.

The new judges began their labour. All the witnesses still living who had known Joan appeared before them. Military leaders who had fought with her — as Alençon and Dunois — gave testimony to her memory. Three clerks who had exercised their office at the trial in Rouen furnished proof of irregularities that had been committed. No defender of the former proceedings appeared. Thereupon the court, giving the most simple explanation of all that had determined the former judges, found a hundred and one reasons for nullity. In consequence the new judges quashed, in 1456, the decree of their predecessors — as stained with illegality, fraud, violence, and manifest partiality. They declared the twelve articles of the condemnation false, calumnious, and full of fraud — while recognising that the manner in which they had been drawn up might easily have deceived the good faith of those that acted upon them. They declared the trial iniquitous — that Joan had been judged by her enemies. The church thus restored that which an ecclesiastical tribunal had struck down. The sentence of rehabilitation was published in every town of France; Orleans raised on a bridge over the Loire a statue to her liberator. Rouen held expiation processions in honour of her victim.[k]

A BRITISH ESTIMATE OF JOAN'S SERVICES

Those writers who consider Joan of Arc not merely as a female Mohammed, but as a heaven-sent saviour, do not enhance the virtue or the beauty of her own natural character, whilst they exaggerate the depression, and derogate from the martial spirit of the French, by representing them as only to be saved at the time by an avatar. It does not appear that France was in such imminent danger, or was likely to be conquered, even had Orleans fallen by a handful of English, very unequal to the subjugation of the country.

If the starting up a great prince or warrior, like Henry V, on the throne of England had brought disaster upon France, his premature death, with the consequent abstraction of English aid and English vigour from the duke of Bedford, was a greater blow to English ascendency than any supposed mission of Joan of Arc. If the French were defeated at Agincourt and Verneuil, this was mainly owing to the yeoman middle classes, which formed the strength of the English army, whilst a similar class in France was kept out of the ranks of the national defence. But the sieges of Rouen and of Orleans had restored to the French peasant and the French townsman the right and the habit of wielding a sword by the side of the gentleman. What Joan of Arc did was to restore their confidence; this was her good fortune or her mission. The disinherited and degraded middle and lower classes rose to defend and save the monarchy, which counts and barons had allowed to fall with themselves into the mire. This was the revolution, this the new spirit that saved France from the English, and not the trumped-up miracle of La Pucelle. It was the red right arm of French manhood which did that act, and not the prophecies of Merlin, the visions of saints, or the embroidered banner of the virgin of Domrémy.[g]



CHAPTER IX

"THE CONVALESCENCE OF FRANCE"

[1431–1461 A.D.]

Confused as was the long period of the last years of Charles VII, it may nevertheless be thus summarily defined — the convalescence of France. France recovered and England fell ill. — MICHELET.[b]

THE sorceress, the she-devil, was burned; the charm was doubtless broken, the spell removed; there was nothing now to prevent the English from conquering the kingdom of France. Nevertheless, before they should recover the power in fact they deemed it right to have the power in law on their side — to legitimise the young Henry VI by having him crowned. The coronation to which Charles VII had been led by an agent of the devil being, by that means itself, null and void, they wished to have for their little prince a coronation perfectly orthodox and irreprehensible.

The ceremony took place the 17th of December, 1431; not at Rheims, which the English no longer held, but at Paris. An English prelate, Beaufort, the cardinal-bishop of Winchester, officiated, to the great discontent of the bishop of Paris; for assistants there were English lords, not a single French prince. There was no liberation of prisoners, no reduction of taxes, no largesse to the people. "A bourgeois marrying off his daughter," says the Bourgeois de Paris,[i] "would have done better."[c] The child king was found to have little intelligence or grace, and the day after Christmas he was taken from Paris to Rouen, and thence to England.[d]

Paris was far from prosperous under foreign domination. Public officials were ill paid. The university was no longer recruited, except from the English and Burgundian provinces. It lost its pupils; it lost still more when, a month after his arrival, Bedford established schools of civil and canon law at Caen, in the midst of the English provinces. Charles responded by creating, in his turn, a university at Poitiers, and by according new privileges to the schools of Angers.[e]

It was now that period when the feeble bond that still united the duke of Burgundy to the English began to give way. His sister, Bedford's wife, died in November, 1432. The duke of Burgundy had never had much reason to like the English, nor had he more to fear them. Their war in France was becoming ridiculous.[b]

The marshal De Boussac, as the result of a conspiracy, was almost able to seize Rouen. His advance guard was already in the castle when his bands began to quarrel over the division of the booty, and the English drove them off. Dunois was more successful at Chartres; he had an understanding with a preacher of renown. The latter announced that he would preach every day in a certain church; the entire English garrison assisted devoutly at the sermon while the French took the town. The English, from whom so important a place had been taken, were not even able to capture a hamlet. A certain French captain, John Foucauld by name, was stationed at Lagny and greatly harassed the neighbourhood of Paris. The duke of Bedford and the earl of Warwick went to besiege the place. They soon made a breach in the wall, but when they saw the besieged bravely awaiting them, they returned to Paris, where they arrived on Easter eve, "apparently to confess," says the Bourgeois de Paris,[f] maliciously, in his journal. Meanwhile several soldiers of fortune in the service of the king of France had seized St. Valéry, Gerberoy, St. Denis, and other places (1432).[c]

The Parisians, delighted at this retreat of Bedford from Lagny, made themselves no less merry on the subject of his second marriage. At fifty years of age he wedded a girl of seventeen, "sprightly, fair, and gracious," a daughter of the count of Saint-Pol, one of the duke of Burgundy's vassals, and that abruptly and furtively without saying a word to his brother-in-law. The duke would not have consented to the match. The Saint-Pols, raised by him for the purpose of guarding his frontier, were beginning to play that double game which was to be their ruin; they were giving the English a footing in the dominions of the duke of Burgundy.

Beaufort saw more clearly that if the alliance with Burgundy were broken off, the war would change its aspect; that it would become far more costly, and that the church would infallibly have to bear the expense. A beginning had been made with the church of France, from which it was sought to wrest all the pious donations it had received for sixty years. In this state of anxiety, he exerted himself strongly for peace, and had it arranged that a conference should take place between Bedford and Philip the Good. He succeeded in making the two dukes advance towards each other as far as St. Omer. But this was all; once in the town, neither of them would take the first step. Though Bedford ought to have seen clearly that France was lost for the English if he did not bring back the duke of Burgundy to their party, he remained peremptory on the point of etiquette; as the king's representative, he awaited the visit of the king's vassal, who never moved. The rupture was definitive.

France, on the contrary, was gradually becoming reunited, a result brought about chiefly by the efforts of the house of Anjou. The old queen, Yolande of Anjou, the king's mother-in-law, brought him back the Bretons; and in concert with the constable Richemont, the duke of Brittany's brother, she dismissed the favourite, La Trémouille.[1]

It was more difficult to allure the duke of Burgundy, who was supporting the pretender Vaudemont, in Lorraine, against René of Anjou, Yolande's son.[2]

[1 The fall of La Trémouille was due to a conspiracy aroused by his lethargy, through which the English in 1432 were able to regain Montargis and take several important towns. "M. de la Trémouille," says De Brantôme,[f] "was so happy as to prove a faithful and worthy servant to three kings. He was an excellent and worthy captain, and for this reason he had the honour and happiness to be known as 'the knight without fear and without reproach.' Splendid title indeed for him who can keep it, and wear it to the end of his life!"

[2 Vaudemont was the nephew and René the son-in-law of Duke Charles I who had just died. René was appointed heir by Charles' will, but Vaudemont persisted in his pretensions, alleging Lorraine to be a masculine fief.]

That prince, who has remained in the memory of the Angevins and Provençals by the name of "the good king René," possessed all the amiable qualities of old chivalric France; and with them, too, its imprudence and levity. He suffered himself to be beaten and taken prisoner at Bulgnéville, by the Burgundians (July, 1431). The duke of Burgundy restored him to liberty, under security.[b]

Philip the Good might well have congratulated himself on a victory which clipped the wings of the royalists in Lorraine, but he made no use of it, and now showed himself disposed for pacific measures. In September, 1431, at the very moment that the royalist captains were preparing to invade Charolais and Burgundy, he signed at Chinon a two years' truce with Charles VII for his frontiers of Réthelois, Picardy, Burgundy, and Charolais.[e] The English had no good reason for their complaints of Philip's loyalty in this; if he had concluded a separate truce for his own states, he did not treat for peace on their behalf or without them. The English ambassadors were called to take part in all negotiations; but it was very evident, at the conferences of Auxerre (July, 1432) and those held in the village of Simport (now Seineport) in March, 1433, that while peace was now almost an easy matter between Charles VII and Philip on account of the great concessions to which the king resigned himself, it was next to impossible between Charles VII and Henry VI.[f]

The princes were becoming friends, and there was nothing to hinder the people from doing likewise, if they had the will. Paris, governed by Cauchon and other bishops, tried to get rid of them and expel the English. Normandy, even, that little French England, at last grew weary of a war of which it was made to bear the whole burden. A vast rising took place, in 1434, among the rural population of Lower Normandy; the leader was a peasant named Quatrepieds; but there were knights also engaged in the affair, which was not a mere Jacquerie. The English could not fail soon to lose the province.

THE TREATY OF ARRAS (1435 A.D.)

They seemed themselves to look on their prospects as desperate. Bedford abandoned Paris. The poor town, smitten by turns with famine and pestilence, was too hideous an abode. The duke of Burgundy, nevertheless, ventured to visit it with his wife and son, on his way to the great assembly at Arras, where the terms of a treaty of peace were to be arranged. The Parisians welcomed him, and implored his aid, as though he had been an angel from God. The assembly in question was one of all Christendom, including ambassadors from the council, the pope, the emperor, the sovereigns of Castile, Aragon, Navarre, Naples, Milan, Sicily, Cyprus, Poland, and Denmark. All the French princes, and all those of the Low Countries, attended in person or by deputy; so did the University of Paris, and a number of good towns. All these personages being assembled, England herself arrived, in the person of the cardinal-bishop of Winchester. The conferences opened August 5th, 1435, in the chapel of St. Waast.

The first question to be considered was the possibility of an accommodation between Charles VII and Henry VI. But how was it to be effected? Each of them claimed the crown. Charles VII offered Aquitaine, and even Normandy, which was still in the hands of the English. The latter required that each party should retain what it then had, with the exception of mutual exchanges for the purpose of rendering the possessions of each more compact.

[1435 A.D.]

Nothing could be made of the English, and they were allowed to depart from Arras. Everyone turned towards the duke of Burgundy, beseeching him to have pity on the realm and on Christendom, which suffered so much from these long wars. But he could not make up his mind; his conscience and his knightly honour were engaged, he said; he had given his signature; besides, was he not bound to take vengeance for his father's murder? The pope's legates told him he might make light of such scruples, for they had power to release him from his oaths. But this did not yet satisfy him. Ecclesiastical law not seeming sufficient, recourse was had to civil law, and a fine case was drawn up, in which, to leave the minds of the jurisconsults the more free, the parties were designated by the names of Darius and Ahasuerus. The English and the French doctors gave such opinions as might have been expected of them respectively; but those of Bologna, whom the legates brought forward, declared, in conformity with the French lawyers, that Charles VI had no power to conclude the Treaty of Troyes.



A French Nobleman, First Part of Fifteenth Century

The duke of Burgundy allowed the suppliants to argue and implore. But, in reality, the desired change had already taken place in him; he was weary of the English. The Flemings, who had so often forced their counts to remain united with England, were becoming hostile to that nation; they suffered from the forays of the garrison of Calais, and were maltreated when they went to that great wool market. England was then becoming a rival and enemy of Flanders; had she been friendly to that country, her friendship would henceforth have availed little. The duke of Burgundy had gained the barrier of the Somme, through the English alliance, and rounded and completed his Burgundy; but their alliance could no longer guarantee him the possession of his new acquisitions. Divided as they were, it was with difficulty they could defend themselves. Bedford alone could maintain some sort of balance between Winchester and Gloucester; but he died, at Rouen in September, 1435, and his decease was a further alleviation to the conscience of the duke of Burgundy. Thenceforth the treaties concluded with Bedford, as regent of France, appeared to him less sacred; such was the strictly literal mode of viewing things in the Middle Ages; he deemed himself bound during the lifetime of him to whom he had given his signature.

The duke of Burgundy's two brothers-in-law, the duke de Bourbon and the constable De Richemont, contributed not a little to fix his wavering purposes. They plied him so hard that he vouchsafed at last to yield to their entreaties and grant mercy. The Treaty of Arras cannot be characterised by any other phrase. The king asked pardon of the duke for the murder of John the Fearless, and the duke did not pay him homage; thereby he became

himself king, as it were. He retained for himself and his heirs all he had acquired: on the one side Péronne and all the fortresses on the Somme, on the other Auxerre and Mâcon.

The explanations and reparations for the death of Duke John were very humiliating. The king was to say, or have it said, that at that time he was very young, had as yet little knowledge, and had not been sufficiently advised to see duly into the matter, but that at present he was about to use all diligence in searching out the guilty parties. He was to found a chapel in the church at Montereau, and a convent for twelve Carthusians; and to erect, moreover, on the bridge where the act had been perpetrated, a stone cross, which was to be kept in repair at the king's expense. The ceremony of forgiveness took place in the church of St. Waast. The dean of Paris, Jean Tudert, threw himself at the feet of Duke Philip, and cried him mercy, on the king's part, for the murder of John the Fearless. The duke appeared moved, raised and embraced him, and told him there should never be war between King Charles and himself. The duke de Bourbon and the constable then swore a peace, as did the French and Burgundian ambassadors and lords.

But the reconciliation would not have been complete if the duke of Burgundy had not concluded a definitive arrangement with the brother-in-law of Charles VII, René of Anjou. René, not having been able to adhere to the terms of the first treaty, had preferred returning to prison. Philip the Good released him and gave him back part of his ransom money, in consideration of the marriage of his niece, Mary de Bourbon, with René's son. Thus were the houses of Burgundy, Bourbon, and Anjou united with each other and with the king. That of Brittany still vacillated; the duke did not declare himself; he found great profit in the war; it was said that thirty thousand Normans had taken refuge in Brittany. But whether the duke was English or French, his brother Richemont was constable of France: the Bretons followed him cheerfully; the Breton bands were the main force of Charles VII, and were called the *bons corps*.

THE FRENCH RETURN TO PARIS (1436–1437 A.D.)

This self-reconciliation of France drove the English distracted; their wrath blinded them, and they plunged as it were wilfully into their ill fortune. The duke of Burgundy wished to keep some terms with them, and offered them his mediation; but they rejected it, and plundered and killed the Flemish merchants in London. Flanders becoming incensed in its turn, the duke seized the opportunity to lead the communes to the siege of Calais.[b] For this he collected a large army in 1436, the Flemings, especially the Ghenters, answering his call to the number of forty thousand, and promising not merely to second his enterprise, but to accomplish it themselves. They found the task, however, so much beyond their power, that they grew disheartened, accused the Burgundians of betraying them, and marched off leaving the duke to extricate himself with his other forces as best he could.[g]

The Burgundian party turned round like the duke; those of Paris, of the *halles* even, the Burgundian quarter *par excellence*, called in the king's forces and his constable, and installed them in the town. The English, who had still fifteen hundred men-at-arms there, and at first made a show of resisting, shut themselves pitiably in the Bastille, and then, apprehensive of famine, obtained leave to embark and descend the river to Rouen. The people, who had been harshly governed by three bishops on behalf of the English, pursued

[1436–1438 A.D.]

them with hootings, and shouted, "Fox! fox!" after the bishop of Thérouanne, the chancellor of the English. The Parisians were loath to let them off so cheaply, for they calculated that the ransom of so many rich nobles would bring in at least 200,000 livres; but it would have been necessary to besiege the Bastille, and the constable himself was at his shifts, money failing him. The king had only 1,000 livres to give him for the purpose of retaking Paris (1436).[b]

At length, in November, 1437, Charles made his solemn entrance into his capital, from which he had been an exile nearly twenty years. The constable rode on the monarch's right hand, the count de Vendôme on his left, and the royal cavalcade was met at the Porte St. Denis by "the seven virtues and the seven mortal sins, well clad, mounted upon various beasts." Charles had previously reunited the parliament of Poitiers to that of Paris, and the new judges and councillors returned to take their seats, and thus restore Paris to the rank of judicial capital of the *languedoïl*.[g]

THE PRAGMATIC SANCTION (1438 A.D.)

In that vast and multitudinous wretchedness, amid so many ruins, two things were still standing—the nobility and the church. The nobility had served the king against the English, gratuitously served a beggared king; it had consumed much of its own wealth, at the same time that it devoured the people's substance, and it looked for compensation. The church, on its part, represented itself as very poor and afflicted; but there was this notable difference, that its poverty consisted in the suspension of its revenues—in general the capital remained. The king, indebted to the nobility, could discharge his obligations only at the church's expense, either by forcing it to pay for him, which seemed difficult and dangerous, or rather by gently and indirectly, for the sake ostensibly of the ecclesiastical liberties, re-establishing the elections in which the lords had the paramount influence, and thus enabling them to dispose of benefices. These were often bestowed by the pope on the partisans of England; Charles VII had no inducement to respect his claims. He adopted in his *pragmatique* of Bourges (July 7th, 1438) the decrees of the council of Bâle, which re-established elections, and recognised the rights of the noble patrons of churches to present to benefices. These patrons, descendants of the pious founders or protectors, regarded the churches as portions severed from their fiefs, and desired nothing better than to protect them still, that is to say, to put their own men into them, by causing them to be elected by the monks or canons.

What delighted France in its then extreme poverty was that the *pragmatique* would stop the outgoing of money from the kingdom. The absence of gold was acutely felt. Under Charles VII it was really necessary as an instrument of war and a means of rapid action. The bankers were turning their speculations in that direction; previously occupied with the exchange of Rome and the transmission of the ecclesiastic tithes, they were about to draw on the English that bill of exchange which was paid with Normandy.

One thing, however, was to be feared, namely, that a church so completely closed against papal influence might become not national but purely seigniorial. It was not the king or the state that would inherit what the pope lost, but the lords and the nobles. At a period when organisation was still so feeble, it was not very practicable to act with effect from a distance; now at every election the lord was on the spot to present or recommend, and the chapters obsequiously elected his nominee; the king was very far away.

It was a question whether the nobility were worthy of being intrusted with the chief active part in the affairs of the church — whether the lords on whom really devolved the choice of pastors and the responsibility for the salvation of souls were themselves the pure souls whom the Holy Spirit would enlighten in so delicate a mattter.

THE ATROCIOUS CRIMES OF THE BARONS

In his fief the baron of the twelfth century, haughty and stern as he might be, had yet a rule of conduct which, though unwritten, seemed but the more inviolable. This rule was "usage," custom. In his most violent proceedings he saw himself accosted by his men, who said respectfully to him: "Messire, it is not the 'usage' of the good people here." The fear of God and respect for usage, those two bridles of the feudal times, were broken in the fifteenth century. The lord was no longer a resident on his estate, and knew neither his people nor their customs. If he returns, it is with soldiers to raise money abruptly; he falls on the country occasionally like storm and hail, everyone hides at his approach, and the whole district is seized with a panic.

This lord, though bearing his father's seigniorial name, was not the more a lord for all that; he was commonly a rough captain, a barbarian, scarcely a Christian. Often he was a leader of *houspilleurs*, *tondeurs*, or *écorcheurs*, like the bastard de Bourbon, the bastard of Vaurus, a Chabannes, or a La Hire. *Ecorcheurs* (flayers) was their right name: ruining the ruined, taking away the shirt from him who had been left with nothing but a shirt to cover him; and if nothing remained but the skin, then stripping off the skin.

It would be a mistake to suppose that it was only the captains of the *écorcheurs*, the bastards, the lords without lordship, that were so ferocious. The grandees and the princes had acquired a strange appetite for blood in these hideous wars. What shall we say when we see John of Ligny, of the house of Luxemburg, exercising his nephew, the count of Saint-Pol, a boy of fifteen, in massacring fugitives?

They treated their relations just as they did their enemies; in fact, as regarded safety, the enemy was better off than the relation. It would seem as though there were no fathers, no brothers in those days. The count d'Harcourt keeps his father a prisoner all his life; the countess de Foix poisons her sister, the sire de Giac his wife; the duke of Brittany starves his brother to death, and that publicly — the horror-stricken passer-by heard his piteous voice imploring a morsel of bread for charity. One evening, on the 10th of January, Count Adolphus of Gelderland drags his old father out of bed, marches him five leagues on foot through the snow without hose, and throws him into a subterraneous dungeon (1440). The son, indeed, might have said in his own behalf that parricide was matter of usage in the family. But we find it likewise in most of the great houses of the time, in all those of the Low Countries, in those of Bar, Verdun, Armagnac, etc.

Gilles de Retz

People were well inured to these things, but one such that came to light stupefied all men with wonder and horror. The duke of Brittany being at Nantes, the bishop, who was his cousin and his chancellor, was emboldened by his presence to proceed against a great lord of the neighbourhood, regarded with singular awe, a Retz of the house of Laval, which was itself a branch

of the Montforts, of the lineage of the dukes of Brittany. Such was the terror inspired by that name that it had silenced every tongue for fourteen years.

The accusation was a strange one. An old woman called La Meffraie used to travel about the country and the heaths, and make up to the children who kept cattle or begged. Caressing and cajoling them, but all the while keeping her face half covered with a piece of black gauze, she used to entice them to the château of the sire de Retz, and they were never seen again. This Gilles de Retz was a very great lord, rich both in patrimony and by his marriage into the house of Thouars, besides which he had inherited the wealth of his maternal grandfather, John de Craon, lord of La Suze, Chantocé, and Ingrande.

There was found in the tower of Chantocé a tunful of calcined children's bones, the remains, it was calculated, of some forty victims. Similar discoveries were made in the château de la Suze, and in every other place where he had made his abode. Murder accompanied him wherever he went. The number of children slaughtered by this beast of extermination is estimated at 140. How slaughtered, and why? In the answer to this question lay something more horrible than death itself. They were offerings to the devil. He invoked the fiends Barron, Orient, Beelzebub, Satan, and Belial, praying them to grant him "gold, knowledge, and power." [1]

He was condemned to the flames and placed at the stake, but not burned. Out of deference for his powerful family and the nobility in general, he was strangled before the flames reached him. The body was not reduced to ashes. "Damsels of high condition," says Jean Chartier,[h] went to the meadows of Nantes, where the execution had taken place, raised the body with their noble hands, and, with the aid of some nuns, gave it very honourable burial in the Carmelite church (1440).

Barbarism had returned, only without what was good in it, simplicity and faith. Feudalism had come back, but without its traits of devotedness and fidelity, and its chivalry. These ghosts of buried feudalism appeared like damned souls bringing unknown crimes to earth from their infernal abode. It mattered not that the English withdrew; France still continued the work of self-extermination. The provinces of the north were becoming a desert; the waste heaths were spreading. In the centre, Beauce was becoming overrun with briers and thickets; two armies sought and could hardly find each other there. The towns in which the whole population of the rural districts sought refuge, absorbed that miserable multitude, and yet remained not the less desolate. A vast number of houses were empty, says the Bourgeois de Paris,[i] and many a door was closed to open no more. The poor took from those houses whatever they could for firing. Paris was burning Paris. We may judge of the other towns from this one, the most populous of all, the town in which the government had held its seat, and where resided those great corporations, the university and the parliament. Famine and wretchedness had made it a focus of disgusting contagious maladies, the nature of which was not very accurately discriminated, but which were called at random the plague. Charles VII had a glimpse of that hideous thing which was still called Paris, was struck with horror, and hurried away. The English did not try to return thither. The two parties withdrew as if by a

[1 Just how much of truth there is in this tale of Gilles de Retz, it would be difficult to determine. The motive alleged for the crimes smacks of the familiar witchcraft stories. A perversion of a type well known to psychiatrists might offer a more plausible explanation, supposing the facts to be assured.]

common understanding. The wolves alone were voluntary visitors, entering at evening in search of carrion; for as they no longer found food in the fields, they were rabid with hunger, and attacked men. The contemporary historian, who no doubt exaggerates, alleges that in September, 1438, they devoured fourteen persons between Montmartre and the Porte St. Antoine.

These terrible miseries are expressed, very feebly indeed, in the *Complaint of the poor Commonalty and the poor Labourers*. It is a medley of lamentations and threats; the starving wretches warn the church, the king, the burghers and merchants, and, above all, the lords, that "the fire is very near their hôtels." They call the king to their aid. But what could Charles VII do — that king of Bourges, that weak and mean-looking personage,[1] how could they expect him to impose respect and obedience on so many audacious men? With what forces was he to put down the *écorcheurs* of the rural districts, and the terrible petty kings of châteaux? They were his own captains;[2] it was with them and through them he was waging war against the English.

CHARLES BEGINS THE WORK OF REFORM (1439 A.D.)

On the 2nd of November, 1439, Charles VII ordained in the states of Orleans, and at their request: that henceforth the king alone shall nominate the captains; that the lords, as well as the royal captains, shall be responsible for the acts of their men; and that both alike must answer before the king's functionaries, that is to say, that henceforth war shall be subjected to the control of justice. The barons shall no longer take anything beyond their seigniorial rights, under pretext of war. War becomes the king's affair, and he undertakes, in consideration of 1,200,000 livres a year granted him by the states, to maintain fifteen hundred lances with six men to each. By and by we shall see him back this cavalry with a newly created infantry of the communes. Contraveners shall obtain no grace; should the king pardon, his servants should take no heed thereof. The ordinance subjoined a more direct and more efficacious threat: the spoils of the contraveners

[1 Henri Baude has a different conception of the personality of the king. He says: "Charles was a man of handsome figure, tall, and of good temperament; of sanguine complexion; humble, gentle, gracious, and of pleasant temper, liberal and not prodigal. He was solitary, living soberly, loving joyously, frank, decorous, and humane. He loved ladies in all honesty, and held all women in honour. His amusements were chess and shooting with the crossbow, and he rose early. The day after he entered a town and the day before he left it he went to the principal church. His oath was 'St. George! St. George!' He took only two meals a day. He spoke and drank little. He had a courteous gravity, tempered familiarity, and effective diligence. His word was the word of a prince and kept as law. He thought continually of the affairs of his kingdom and the relief of his people. He heard three masses a day, that is to say, the high mass with music and two low masses, and said his prayers every day without fail. At meals he was alone at table, and few persons in his room; and his doctor was always there, and honest people and valets who spoke of gay subjects or told old stories in which he took delight.

"Naught cared he for false wisdom. At the yearly feasts, a bishop or abbot was seated at the head of his table, he in the centre, and at the end of the table one of the nobles of royal blood. When the table was spread there was none so great that did not leave the room, and all was so well arranged that none presumed to remain. He loved all virtuous people; was true and certain in promise and in all his acts. When he knew a man of virtue he took him. He had in his house and in his service the children of the princes, great nobles, and barons of his kingdom. He had around him, his chamberlains and others, the most handsome persons of the kingdom."]

[2] Many of these captains of *écorcheurs* have left lasting traces in the memory of the people. The Gascon La Hire has given his name to the knave of hearts. The Englishman, Matthew Gough, whom the chroniclers call Mathago, has remained, we believe, as a puppet and bugbear for children in certain provinces. The history of Gilles de Retz, greatly softened down, has furnished matter for a tale: he is the original of Blue Beard.

shall belong to whoever shall take them. This was a tremendous clause; it armed the peasant, and sounded, as it were, the tocsin in the village.

What partially explains the boldness of the measure is that the self-styled royal captains, the pillagers and *écorcheurs*, had recently damaged their own strength. They had attempted an expedition to Bâle with the hopes of extorting ransom-money from the council, but instead of this they were themselves very roughly handled on their march by the peasants of Alsace; and then, seeing the Swiss ready to receive them, they returned with their tails between their legs. The king, who had taken Montereau, valiantly leading the assault in person (1437), took Meaux with his artillery (1439); then feeling himself in strength, he listened to the complaints made against the soldiery, and lent a gracious ear to the lamentations of his good subjects. Acts of justice were done with rapid despatch; the constable De Richemont, willingly exchanging his functions for those of provost-martial, hanged and drowned all along his route. His brother, the duke of Brittany, did not delay to strike that great blow, the sentencing and burning of Marshal de Retz. This first instance of justice done upon a lord was effected only in God's name, and with the aid of the church; but it was, nevertheless, a warning to the nobility that their impunity was at an end.[b]

The most important effect of the memorable meeting of the states-general of 1439 was to render further meetings of that body unnecessary. In effect, the king was given the exclusive right to raise troops and to levy taxes. This virtually amounted to the creation of a permanent army, and, by implications, to the imposition of a perpetual tax. So at least the king interpreted it. From then on the king, having no need of the authorisation of the estates for the imposition of taxes, took good pains to dispense with its services. In point of fact it assembled but once more during the remaining period of his reign.[p]

Who were the intrepid advisers that urged the king upon this course of proceeding? Who were the servants that could have prompted him to these reforms, and procured for him the name given by contemporaries: Charles "the well served"?

Along with the princes in the council of Charles VII, the count of Maine, the cadet of Brittany, and the bastard of Orleans, there were also petty nobles, the brave Saintrailles, and those wise and politic men, the Brézés, nobles, but men who were nothing without the king. We find in it two burghers, Jacques Cœur, the money-changer, and the master of the artillery, Jean Bureau, both very humble *roturier* names. Bureau was a man of the robe, a master of the accounts. He threw down his pen, and by this remarkable transformation exemplified the truth that an able mind can apply itself to anything. Henry IV reformed the finances through a man of the sword; Charles VII waged war through a financier. Bureau was the first who made an able and scientific use of artillery.

War needs money, and Jacques Cœur contrived to supply it. Whence came he? We are sorry to know so little of his early career. All we know is that in 1432 we find him engaged in commerce in Beirut in Syria; sometime afterwards we see him at Bourges in the capacity of money-changer to the king. This great trader had always one foot in the East, and one in France. Here, he made his son archbishop of Bourges; yonder, he married his nieces or other female relations to the masters of his galleys. On the one hand he was continuing his Egyptian traffic; on the other he was speculating on the maintenance of armies and the conquest of Normandy.

Such were the able and humbly-born councillors of Charles VII. If it be asked who brought them about him, and what was the influence that made him yield to their advice, it will be found, if we are not mistaken, that it was a woman, his mother-in-law, Yolande of Anjou. We see her in possession of power from the beginning of this reign; it was she who caused the Maid to be received with favour; and it was with her on one occasion that the duke of Alençon arranged the preparations for a campaign. This influence, balanced by that of the favourite, seems to have been without a rival from the moment the old queen had given her son-in-law a mistress whom he loved for twenty years (1431–1450). This was Agnes Sorel.

AGNES SOREL; THE *PRAGUERIE* (1440 A.D.)

Agnes la Sorelle or Surelle — she assumed for arms a gold *sureau* (elder tree) — was the daughter of a gownsman, Jean Soreau, but she was noble by the mother's side. She was born in honest Touraine. The *naïveté* of Agnes was early transplanted into a land of craft and policy, Lorraine. She was brought up with Isabella of Lorraine, with whom René of Anjou espoused that duchy. Isabella, the wife of a prisoner, waited on the king to beseech his aid, bringing her children with her and also her good friend from childhood, the demoiselle Agnes. The king's mother-in-law, Yolande of Anjou, who stood also in the same relation to Isabella, was, like her, a woman of masculine mind; and they both agreed to attach Charles VII forever to the interests of the house of Anjou-Lorraine. The gentle creature was given him for his mistress, to the great satisfaction of the queen, who wished at any cost to remove La Trémouille and the other favourites.

Everyone knows the little story how Agnes said one day to the king that, when very young, she had been informed by an astrologer that she was to be loved by one of the most valiant kings in the world: she had thought that this was Charles, but she now saw clearly it was the king of England, who took so many fine towns from him in defiance of his beard; therefore to the king of England she would go. Stung by these words, the king burst into tears, "and quitting his hunting and his gardens, he took the bit in his teeth," and to such purpose, that he drove the English out of the kingdom.

The pretty verses by Francis I[1] prove that this tradition was of earlier date than Brantôme.[l] Be this as it may, we have an equivalent testimony in favour of Agnes from a hostile pen, that of the nearly contemporary Burgundian chronicler, Olivier de la Marche.[m] "Certest Agnes was one of the most beautiful women I ever saw, and did in her quality much good to the realm." And again: "She took pleasure in bringing under the king's notice young soldiers and gentle companions, by whom the king was afterwards well served."

Charles VII thought wisdom charming when preached by such lips; old Yolande in all probability spoke through Agnes, and no doubt she had the principal part in all that was done. More politic than scrupulous, she had welcomed with equal readiness the two girls that came to her so *à propos* from Lorraine, Joan of Arc and Agnes, the saint and the mistress, who both in their several ways were of service to the king and the realm.

This council of women, *parvenus*, and *roturiers*, it must be confessed, did

[1] More honour, gentle Agnes, thou hast won,
For that thy voice our France recoverèd,
Than could be achieved by cloister-prisoned nun,
Or holiest beadsman to the desert fled.

[1440 A.D.]

not command much reverence, or greatly tend to set off to advantage the unroyal figure of Charles VII. To sit as judge of the realm on the throne of St. Louis, and be like him the guardian of God's Peace, he ought apparently to have surrounded himself with people of a different sort. The league of the three ladies, the dowager queen, the queen, and the mistress, was not edifying in anybody's eyes. What was Richemont? An executioner. Jacques Cœur? A trader in Saracen lands. A Jean Bureau, a limb of the law, "an inkhorn," had made himself a captain, was riding all over the kingdom with his cannon, and not a fortress could stand before him; was not that a shame for the men of the sword? The foxes had become lions. Thenceforth the knights were to account to the knights at law—the most noble lords and the high justiciars were to tremble before the underlings of justice!

So much was this the tone of feeling prevalent among the nobles, not excepting those who were most immediately in contact with Charles VII, that even Dunois quitted the council after the famous ordinance. "The cool and tempered lord," as Chartier[h] calls him, repented of having served his king too well. This bastard of Orleans had begun his fortunes by defending the town of Orleans, his brother's appanage, in which service he had very adroitly employed the heroic simplicity of the Maid. After having grown great through the king, he wished to grow great against the king. The misfortune was that his brother the duke was still in England; but the ancient enemy of the house of Orleans, the duke of Burgundy (converted no doubt by Dunois), was labouring to get that future chief of the malcontents out of the hands of the English.

The duke of Alençon threw himself headlong into the affair; the Bourbons and the Vendômes lent their hands to it. The ex-favourite, La Trémouille, whom Richemont had removed, readily engaged in it. The most eager of all were the leaders of the *écorcheurs*, the bastard de Bourbon, Chabannes, and Le Sanglier ("the wild boar"). In truth, the matter was one that most nearly concerned them; the lords had their honours and jurisdictional prerogatives to contend for; but as for them, they had their necks to save; the gallows stared them in the face.

Nothing was now wanting but a leader. As the duke of Orleans could not be had, the malcontents took the dauphin, a mere child in point of age, but it was thought that a name would be sufficient. The supposed child, who was already Louis XI, had made his first efforts in arms, as he made his last, against the very party of the lords that chose him for their chief. At fourteen years of age he had been commissioned to pacify the marches of Brittany and Poitou. His first capture had been that of one of Marshal de Retz's lieutenants; such a commencement did not promise the grandees a very trusty friend. Friend or not, he accepted their offers. This dauphin of France resembled Charles VII in no respect, but took rather after his grandmother, who was sprung from the houses of Bar and Aragon.

The king was keeping his Easter at Poitiers, and was at dinner, when word was brought him that St. Maixent had been seized by the duke of Alençon and the sire de la Roche; whereupon Richemont said to him in Breton fashion, "Remember King Richard II, who shut himself up in a fortress and got taken." The king thought the hint a good one, mounted his horse, and galloped with four hundred lances to St. Maixent. The burghers had been fighting four-and-twenty hours for their king, when he came to their relief. De la Roche's men were decapitated or drowned, according to Richemont's custom, but Alençon's were let go. The small fortresses of Poitou did

not hold out; Richemont carried them one by one. Dunois then began to reflect, and he calculated too that the first who should leave the rest would be allowed good terms. He came, was well received, and congratulated himself on the course he had adopted, when he saw the king stronger than he had supposed, with 4,800 cavaliers, and 2,000 archers at his back, without having been obliged to weaken the garrisons in the marches of Normandy.

More than one of Dunois' party thought as he did. Many an *écorcheur* of the south took the king's pay, and fought against the *écorcheurs* of the north. Charles VII drove back the duke de Bourbon upon the Bourbonnais, securing the good will of the towns and châteaux by prohibiting all pillage. He assembled the states of Auvergne, and got them to declare loudly that the rebels were hostile to the king, only because he protected the poorer classes against the plunderers. The princes, abandoned by their followers, and obtaining no support from the duke of Burgundy, came in and made their submission; first Alençon, then the duke de Bourbon and the dauphin. As for La Trémouille and two others, the king would not receive them. The dauphin hesitated about accepting a pardon which was not extended to his friends, and said to the king, "I find then, my liege, that I must go back to them, for I have promised so." The king replied coldly, "The gates are open for you, Louis, and if they are not wide enough, I will have sixteen or twenty fathoms of the wall pulled down for you."



FRENCH NOBLEMAN, MIDDLE OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

This war, so well conducted, was not less wisely terminated. The duke de Bourbon was deprived of his possessions in central France (Corbeil, Vincennes, etc.) and the dauphin was dismissed from court, and assigned an establishment on the frontier, in Dauphiné. Thus he was isolated, and allotted his separate portion; there was no getting rid of him, except by giving him a little royalty, in advance of his hereditary expectations.

This *praguerie* of France (it was so called after the name of the great Bohemian *praguerie*), although it was so quickly ended, nevertheless produced some disastrous results. The military reform was postponed. The English were emboldened to attack Harfleur, which they took and retained. They released the duke of Orleans at the request of the duke of Burgundy (1440). When the ancient enemy of his house thus exerted himself to take him out of captivity, the king could not decently refuse likewise to guarantee the ransom-money, and aid in the deliverance of the dangerous prisoner. He proceeded straight on his return to the duke of Burgundy, who threw the chain of the Golden Fleece[1] over his neck, and gave him his niece in marriage. Against whom was formed this close union of two enemies, if not against the king? He took the hint.

[1 The order of the Golden Fleece was instituted at Bruges in 1429, by the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, in honour of one of his mistresses, Marie de Cumbrugge, whose red tresses had been the object of many pleasantries. On the extinction of the Burgundian house the grand-mastership passed to the Habsburgs.]

[1440–1442 A.D.]

First of all, he obtained from the states a tenth to be levied on all the clergy of the realm. He recalled Tannegui du Châtel, the mortal enemy of the house of Burgundy. Then concentrating all his forces towards the north, he proceeded along the frontier, doing justice upon the Burgundian, Lorrainian, and other captains, who were desolating the land. Among those who made their submission, there was a man of turbulence, the most audacious of plunderers; audacious both from the strength his birth gave him, and because he was the common agent of the duke de Bourbon and the duke of Burgundy; this was the bastard de Bourbon. He did not get off so cheaply as he had expected. The king handed him over, Bourbon as he was, to the provost, who put him on his trial just like any other robber; and after being well and duly found guilty, he was put in a sack, and thrown into the river.

Another lesson, not less instructive, was given. The young count of Saint-Pol, relying on the protection of the duke of Burgundy, dared to intercept some of the king's cannon on the march, and carry them off; the king deprived him of two of his best fortresses; Saint-Pol hastened to the king and besought pardon, but he could obtain no favour, except by submitting to the decision of the parliament on the litigated question of the Ligny inheritance.

EFFECTIVE PROGRESS AGAINST ENGLAND (1441–1444 A.D.)

Meanwhile the English, all this time so near Paris, and so strongly established on the lower Seine, had advanced up the river and seized Pontoise. Lord Clifford, who had surprised that important and formidable post, kept possession of it in person. The inveterate obstinacy of the Cliffords acquired but too much notoriety in the wars of the Roses. Besides the English, there were in Pontoise numerous deserters, who knew they had no quarter to expect.

Invincible pertinacity of purpose was displayed on both sides. The duke of York, regent of France, now came to the aid of Clifford, whom he was afterwards to put to death in the civil wars. He brought with him an army from Normandy, revictualled the place, and offered battle (June); Talbot was with him. The king let the English pass, fell back, and returned. Talbot also returned, and again threw provisions into the town (July). The duke of York once more marched his army back, but could not yet bring on an engagement. He was allowed to roam over the ruined Île-de-France as much as he pleased, and waste his strength in those useless evolutions. When they had exhausted and harassed themselves, in four times revictualling Pontoise, Charles VII seriously resumed the siege; Jean Bureau battered the walls with admirable activity; two murderous assaults were made, that lasted five hours; first a church, that served as a redoubt, was carried, and then the place itself (September 16th, 1441). Thus men, who dared not meet the English in the plain, attacked and defeated them by storm.

The recapture of Pontoise was a deliverance for Paris, and for the whole country around; cultivation could thenceforth recommence, the means of subsistence were secured. Yet the Parisians evinced no gratitude to the king; they felt but their present miseries and the burden of the taxes; these were beginning to affect the brotherhoods even, and the churches, which were loud in their complaints. There was no want of willingness on the part of the princes to take advantage of these discontents. The duke of Burgundy, without himself appearing, assembled them in his own home at

Nevers (March, 1442). The duke of Orleans, with whom he did as he pleased, since he had delivered him, presided for him over the meeting, which consisted of the dukes de Bourbon and d'Alençon, the counts d'Angoulême, d'Etampes, and de Dunois. The king frankly sent his chancellor to this conclave which was held against him, and notified to them that he would readily hear what they had to say.

Their demand and alleged grievances very plainly showed what were their secret views. The princes, therefore, in their love for the public welfare, and for the good people of France, set forth before the king the necessity of making peace. They called for the repression of the brigands.

The king's reply, which was sedulously made public, was overwhelming, and the more so as its tone was calm and moderate. He answers specially, respecting the taxes, that the aids had been consented to by the lords on whose property they had been levied; that as to the tallages, the king had "notified" them to the three estates, although in matters so urgent, when the enemy was in occupation of one portion of the kingdom, and was destroying the rest, he had a good right to levy tallages of his royal authority. "It is not necessary to that end," he says, "to assemble the estates; it is but a burden for the poor people who have to pay the charges of those who attend. Many notable persons have requested that these convocations should cease."

The king, leaving the malcontents to waste time in their meeting at Nevers, was then performing a grand and useful journey all through his kingdom, from Picardy to Gascony, everywhere establishing peace, especially in the marches, in Poitou, Saintonge, and the Limousin. Strengthened in the north by the recovery of Pontoise, he went to make head against the English in the south. The count d'Albret, being hard pressed by them, had promised to surrender if the king did not come on the 23rd of June to "keep his day," and await them on the *lande* of Tartas. They liked the condition, not believing that he could arrive in time, much less that he would offer them battle. On the appointed day they saw the king of France and his army on the *lande* (June 21st, 1442). All these Gascons, who had imagined themselves far beyond the king's reach in a world of their own, were beginning to feel that he was everywhere. They came and did homage, performed feudal service, and the king rendered justice to them.

He did this conspicuously in an important case the following year (March, 1443). The estates of Comminges supplicated Charles VII on behalf of the aged countess de Foix who had been imprisoned by her husband. He frightened the count de Foix, liberated the old countess, divided the usufruct of Comminges between the husband and wife, and adjudged the property to himself. This startling act of justice struck great awe into all those lords who had hitherto been so independent.

This was not all. In order to remain always among them as judge, the king gave them a royal parliament, which was to reside in Toulouse. This judicial royalty of the south was altogether free of the parliament of Paris; it judged in accordance with the law of the country, the written law, and was not dependent on anyone, but was self-elected. Until such time as this great body could establish order and justice in Languedoc, Charles VII authorised the poor to take justice into their own hands, and hunt down the brigands and vagrant soldiers.

He could not remain long absent from the north. Dieppe, which had been recovered by a fortunate and bold stroke, was in danger of being lost again. A great fleet and an army were every moment expected from England; it was urgently necessary to anticipate their arrival. The dauphin

[1443–1444 A.D.]

got permission to undertake this service along with Dunois; many Picard and Norman gentlemen also volunteered. The Bastille was taken. The duke of Somerset, the English commander, returned to Rouen to rest from his toils and take up his winter quarters.

That winter, whilst Somerset was enjoying his victorious repose, the dauphin Louis was rapidly traversing the whole kingdom, to ruin and destroy the best friend of the English. The count d'Armagnac, dissatisfied by the way in which Comminges had been disposed of without giving him a share, had attempted to seize the whole country. He reckoned on the English, and particularly on the duke of Gloucester, who in fact wanted to marry Henry VI to a daughter of the count. The dauphin set out in winter, made his way over snows and swollen rivers, and found the game in its lair, everything that bore the name of Armagnac shut up in one place. Gloucester and the war party, though they had encouraged Armagnac, were unable to defend him. They had enough to do to defend themselves in England against the bishops, and the partisans of peace, Winchester and Suffolk, who had gained the upper hand.[b] Painful as it was to their pride they were obliged at conferences held at Arras, in 1444, to beg for a truce and the hand of a French princess, Margaret of Anjou, for their young king Henry VI, placing also a new enemy at their gates through the marriage of the dauphin Louis with Margaret of Scotland, daughter of James I.



COSTUME OF A NOBLEWOMAN, MIDDLE OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

EXPEDITION TO SWITZERLAND AND LORRAINE

Charles VII only granted that truce in order the better to complete the work of reform begun in 1439.[c] But there was a third people very embarrassing during the truce, the war-folk namely. What could be done was to induce them to go and rob elsewhere, to quit ruined France for thriving Germany, and make a pilgrimage to the council of Bâle, to the rich and saintly towns of the Rhine, and the fat ecclesiastical principalities.

Just then the king received two applications for aid, the one from the emperor Frederick III against the Swiss, the other from René, duke of Lorraine, against the cities of the empire. The king was equally favourable to both proposals, and generously promised aid for and against the Germans.[b]

Switzerland had founded and consolidated its independence of Austria and the empire in three battles — Morgarten, Sempach, and Näfels — in which a handful of peasants had heroically vanquished great feudal armies. The French nobility was always ready for positive warfare, but that of Germany

showed itself more circumspect and the Austrian provinces were reduced to setting, by means of wretched intrigue, the Swiss cantons one against the other, and then if possible to intervene. This time Frederick III reckoned to make the Armagnacs of Charles VII intervene for him.

The Battle of Sankt Jakob (1444 A.D.)

Charles hastened to set in motion, in as orderly a fashion as possible, an army of 14,000 French and 8,000 English, Scotch, Brabanters, Spaniards, and Italians. The commander-in-chief was the former leader of the praguerie — the dauphin Louis. This terrible band turned the Jura in fairly good order, and entered Switzerland by crossing the little river Birse. The Swiss, who were then besieging Zurich, were able to send only 2,000 men to meet the enemy. These brave fellows had expected only to skirmish and knew not with what force they had to deal. A messenger had come from Bâle to warn them of the numbers of the French, but they had killed him ; and in the brutal pride their former successes had inspired, they threw themselves head-foremost on the first corps they met (1444). Their bravoura did not save them. After making a desperate resistance in a hospital and behind the dilapidated walls of a garden, their position was forced and they perished, every one. The dauphin had such respect for the brave men that fought so well that he went no further and made a treaty of alliance with the Swiss. As for the *écorcheurs*, they found nothing to take away from these poor mountaineers and many turned towards Alsace and Swabia.[c]

The dauphin's return, and the report of the check the Swiss had suffered, considerably advanced the affairs of Lorraine. The towns which sheltered themselves under the name of the empire saw that, if the emperor and the German nobility had called in the French to the heart of the German countries, to save Zurich, they would not come and fight the French on the marches of France. Toul and Verdun acknowledged the king as protector.

Metz alone resisted. That great and aspiring town had others dependent on it, and was encompassed by from twenty-four to thirty forts. Épinal, however, had from the beginning seized the opportunity to emancipate itself, and had put itself into the king's hands. The forts having afterwards surrendered, the Metz men made up their mind to negotiate. They represented to the king that "they were not of his realm or lordship, but that, in his wars with the duke of Burgundy and others, they had always received and comforted his men." Thereupon, by order of the king, Master Jean Rabateau, president of the parliament, propounded many arguments to the contrary. The grand question of the limits of France and the empire could not be settled thus incidentally, and during a truce to the English war. The matter remained undecided. The king contented himself with drawing on the finances of the wealthy town of Metz.[b]

MILITARY AND FINANCIAL REFORMS (1443–1448 A.D.)

These two expeditions had disembarrassed the king of the most riotous among his adventurers, and broken in the rest to an elementary discipline ; it was at last possible to put into execution the ordinance of Orleans. In 1445, the army was consolidated into fifteen companies of one hundred lances ; to each lance six paid men were reckoned — a man-at-arms and his esquire, three archers and a *coutillier*, all mounted. By these were the cities

[1443-1448 A.D.]

garrisoned, the largest having only from twenty to thirty lances; in this way the inhabitants remained stronger than the soldiers, and in a position to check any disorder. The demand for positions in the army was so great that numerous old stagers followed the companies about that they might be ready to snap up the first vacancy. All the others were obliged to retire immediately to their homes without disturbing the peace, under penalty of being given up to justice as vagabonds. Such was the progress of order that they obeyed and at the end of the fifteen days nothing more was heard of them; as for those who had enlisted, they submitted to a rigorous discipline. Charles VII had thus at his disposition a picked troop of nine thousand horse.

By another ordinance, that of April 28th, 1448, the king secured to France an advantage which she had hitherto furnished to foreigners — to the Genoese, at need — but had never herself possessed: a regular and permanent infantry. Each of the sixteen thousand parishes of the kingdom was obliged to furnish the king "a good comrade," said the ordinance, "who has seen service." He had to furnish at his own expense his *brigandine*, a light coat of armour of iron plates joined together; a short coat, light helmet, dagger, sword, cross-bow, and quiver of arrows. He was obliged to drill on all feast days, and be ready to serve the king at any time he should be called upon to do so; he received in payment four francs a month when in service and exemption from all taxes and subsidies, excepting the *aide* and the *gabelle*.

The free archer did not become at once a model soldier; military genius was not developed in a day in a nation so long without arms. But while Villon depicts for us one of those archers dropping on his knees before a scarecrow, taking it for a gendarme, entreating pardon, and beginning to feel extremely ill, satiric poetry is not history; a century later, in 1554, the same archers, incorporated in the provincial legions of Francis I, gained against the first army in the world — the Castilian veterans — a battle that had been once lost by the men-at-arms; still another century, and in 1643, changing their quivers for guns, they had developed into the foot-soldiers that fought at Rocroi.

All these reforms were subordinate to that of the finances, set in motion in 1443 by Jacques Cœur. To establish a reciprocal control by the regulators of finances over one another; to oblige individual receivers to account to the receiver-general and the latter in his turn to the chamber of accounts; to force the king's officers — the ministers of finance, the master of the horse, the treasurer of wars, and the commander of artillery — to render monthly accounts to the king in person — these were excellent and admirable reforms, thanks to which Charles VII found himself in a position to create in France an institution that the most powerful of his predecessors had been unable to establish — a military force dependent only on the king, and protecting him, instead of leaving him at the mercy of the barons' evil humours, as had heretofore been the case. Since Charles V, the ordinary indirect taxes, such as that on salt, on merchandise, and on liquors, had been permanent. Since Charles VI, the land tax (the *taille*), for payment of the soldiers, had become permanent — that is, it continued to be levied without the vote of the estates. But the king gave guarantee for the proper administration of financial justice by declaring sovereign the *cour des aides*, which alone had the right to interpret ordinances pertaining to the taxes and was the last resort of all civil and criminal processes growing out of the administration of the finances.

Though it was not yet possible, in the fifteenth century, to reduce all France to one uniform law, she was at least beginning to emerge from the arbitrary customs of a justice exercised, above all in the north of France,

according to unwritten laws. Charles VII thought — and the thought is an honour to him — that it was essential that all the laws of a kingdom should be written and "agreed upon by the lawyers of each country," and examined and authorised by the supreme court and by the parliament, so that it would not be possible to deviate from the text thus officially inscribed. To him was due this innovation.

THE CLOSE OF THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

Having accomplished these reforms, Charles found himself sufficiently strong to finish with the English. A certain Francis de Surienne, an Aragonese adventurer in the service of the English, wishing to garrison one of the Norman villages possessed by the English, found himself repulsed on all sides. The soldiers, having received from Henry VI neither pay, provisions, nor munitions, were unwilling to share with this foreigner their already insufficient resources. The Aragonese, finding the doors of the allies closed to him, provided for the needs of his company after the fashion of the greater number of the military leaders: during the season of peace he fell upon Fougères, a rich city of Brittany, and gave it over to his men to plunder in lieu of their arrears of pay.

Immediately the king of France and the duke of Brittany demanded of the English governor of Normandy reparation and an indemnity of 1,600,000 crowns damages. They demanded an impossibility. The indemnity not arriving, the French set out to collect it for themselves at Pont-de-l'Arche, Gerberoy, Verneuil. Dunois entered the province with an efficient army which the Burgundians and Bretons joined voluntarily. Pont-Audemer, Lisieux, Mantes, Vernon, Évreux, Louviers, St. Lô, Coutances, and Valognes were taken or surrendered by the inhabitants without striking a blow.

England was then beginning her Wars of the Roses, which during thirty years were to cover her with blood and ruins. The parliament, not as yet daring to take action against the king, fastened upon his minister, the duke of Suffolk, and troubled itself little about Normandy, since the reverses there were new and potent arguments against the accused. The governor, Somerset, instead of concentrating his forces, divided them into twenty garrisons, and sent ambassadors to open negotiations; but, knowing no better how to make treaties than how to make war, he forgot to invest them with authority. Order, proficiency — all that had hitherto contributed to their success was now on the side of the French: to the French Victory went over. On October 18th, 1449, they appeared beneath the walls of Rouen.

In a moment all the inhabitants of Rouen were armed, but armed against the English, who took refuge in the citadel. Somerset was there, and the veteran Talbot, and numerous lords, officers, and soldiers; but it must be remembered that it would have been impossible to resist at once both the population and the French army. There was talk of a treaty, but on what conditions! — that, in addition to Rouen, Caudebec, Villequier, Lillebonne, Tancarville, Harfleur, — that is to say all the lower course of the Seine, — should be delivered up to the king of France; and that a hostage should be furnished in the person of the famous Talbot himself — the English Achilles.

The governor of Honfleur refused to recognise this capitulation. The city was taken in the middle of winter (December, 1449); Harfleur met the same fate. The English, pushed to extremities, sent a knight of great renown, Thomas Kyriell, with 6,000 men. It was a last effort. Landing at Cherbourg, Kyriell sought to join the duke of Somerset at Bayeux, by way of

the shore; the French followed, and on April 15th, 1450, near the village of Formigny, the constables of Richemont from one side, the count of Clermont from the other, vigorously attacked him. Kyriell's soldiers fought bravely, but were defeated and left 4,000 on the field. This insignificant number sufficed to blot out from the minds of the French the 30,000 dead at at Crécy, the 12,000 captive at Poitiers and at Agincourt. Vire, Bayeux, Avranches, Caen, Domfront, and Falaise fell into the hands of Charles.

The numerous garrison of Cherbourg counted upon having nothing to fear, thanks to its own strength and above all to the neighbourhood of the sea. From this side it was taken. The French cannoneers established seven batteries in the sea itself; when the tide rose they left their cannon well anchored on the beach and protected by oiled skins; when the tide fell they returned to them. It was the English who, first of all, had turned against the French, at Crécy and Agincourt, this terrible arm of the artillery; the latter now manipulated it better than themselves. Cherbourg capitulated, and in a year the whole of Normandy was taken. Also the French army presented a novel spectacle: disciplined and obedient, it now lived on its pay and not by plunder.

A month later, Dunois, Saintrailles, Chabannes, and the brothers Jean and Gaspard Bureau, who directed so advantageously the French artillery, marched with 20,000 men against Guienne. Bourg-sur-Gironde, Blaye, Castillon, Libourne, St. Émilion, offshoots from Bordeaux, which the English had loaded with privileges as they had that city, were easily taken. The inhabitants of Bordeaux, so well disposed to the England who bought their wines, attempted a sortie, fled upon catching sight of the enemy, and entered like the others into negotiations. The French granted nearly all that was asked of them. This was the 5th of June, 1451; the surrender was delayed until the 23rd. On that day, the herald of the city having cried with a loud voice for succour from the English for the people of Bordeaux, and no one replying, the gates were opened to the French.

However mild the conquerors were, the great town soon regretted that English domination so far removed as to be scarcely felt. Now it had to pay taxes and furnish soldiers, the harbour was deserted, the shops were encumbered with unsold tuns. If an English army had appeared, no matter how weak, Bordeaux would have thrown herself into its arms. Such an army now appeared.

The government of Henry VI, or, to speak more correctly, of Margaret of Anjou, had need of a great success abroad in order to establish itself at home. Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, now eighty years of age, was charged with bringing Guienne again under the English rule. The first steps were easy. The inhabitants of Bordeaux themselves introduced the English into their town, September 22nd, 1452; almost the whole province followed their example, and the king of France had to recommence his conquest. With the spring of 1453 his troops were marching into Guienne; on the 14th of July they laid siege to Castillon.[c]

The Battle of Castillon (July 17th, 1453)

The royal army, the greater part of which, including the artillery under the Bureau brothers, was concentrated in the camp, nearly two thousand feet long by one thousand wide, occupied also an abbey, which was later on the priory of St. Florent, and which overlooked Castillon; on the plain of Mount Horable, near to the village of Capitourlans, were the Bretons of Count

d'Étampes, to the number of 240 lances under the command of the knights of Hunaudaye and Montauban. The night of the 16th of July was passed in fortifying the camp, which was surrounded by deep trenches and defended by powerful artillery. Talbot on the morning of the 17th attacked the abbeys, defended by eight hundred free archers under the command of Jacques Rouhault and Pierre de Beauvau. The archers, terrified by the impetuosity of the English, who shouted the war-cry of their old leader, abandoned the abbey and retreated in the direction of the entrenched camp, followed by the enemy. On hearing of the approach of Talbot, Jacques de Chabannes left the camp and advanced at the head of two hundred lances. Aided by Rouhault and Beauvau, he protected the retreat of the archers. A very brief engagement took place; one hundred men were killed on either side. Rouhault, thrown from his horse, owed his safety only to the devotion of his archers, to whom he had sworn that he would live and die with them. Chabannes, surrounded at one moment, was delivered by his men.



French Noblewoman, Early Fifteenth Century

Finally it was possible to effect the retreat. Talbot rallied his men and regained the abbey. There, seizing the provisions abandoned by the French, he broke open the casks and distributed wine to his soldiers; it was still early in the day; the earl of Shrewsbury (Talbot) had mass performed by his chaplain. The holy sacrament was about to be celebrated, when news was brought that the French were abandoning their enclosure and fleeing. "Never," he exclaimed, "will I hear mass till I shall, to-day, have overthrown the band of Frenchmen which is before me"; and he gave orders to advance. The English advanced uttering their war-cry, "Talbot, Talbot, St. George!" Mounted on a little nag, the old captain was dressed in a simple red velvet cassock. Vain attempts were made to stop him, he was told that it was a false rumour, and that it would be better to await quietly the onset of the enemy; he answered his standard-bearer, who gave him this advice, by insults, and drove him away, it was said, by a sword-cut across the face. On arriving at the palisade Talbot began to shout, "On foot, on foot, all!" His men-at-arms, supported by the archers, who arrived gradually and fell into rank, were received by a formidable discharge; three hundred catapults, howitzers, culverins, and ribaudequins, the firing of which was directed by the famous gunner Giribault, threw their projectiles, which slew a large number of victims. The English hesitated. Talbot brought them back, and

[1453 A.D.]

formed them in testudo; sheltered behind their bucklers they attacked the entrenchments. Talbot succeeded in planting the banner of St. George on the summit of the trench. A terrible conflict took place; for more than an hour they fought hand to hand.

Suddenly, from the neighbouring heights, the sires de Montauban and de la Hunaudaye descended with their Bretons, and took the enemy in the rear; this movement decided the issue of the combat. The English stopped to face this fresh body of troops. The terrible tempest of the artillery did not cease to rain down on them. Seizing the opportunity, the French dashed from the camp, some on foot, some on horse, and charged with fury. Talbot, though wounded, held out. A blow from a culverin struck him on the leg and threw him under his horse. The French archers surrounded him and pierced him with their arrows. His son, who had vainly endeavoured to persuade him to flee, died at his side, trying to protect him. The English, seeing the fall of their chief, fled in disorder. Some wished to regain their vessels or to cross the Dordogne at the ford of Rozan; the others took the road to St. Émilion. A body of about two thousand men under the leadership of the Gascon nobles fell back in good order on Castillon and succeeded in penetrating into the town. The French, tired, worn out, breathless, renounced the pursuit of the enemy; only the count de Penthièvre, with his troops, gave chase to the fugitives in the direction of St. Émilion. The English army was overwhelmed; thirty knights and four thousand soldiers perished; in the heat of the action they were killed without mercy. It is said that even in our day bones are found in the plain which was the scene of this sanguinary struggle. On the French side the loss was considerable; some of their leaders, Admiral de Bueil, Jacques de Chabannes, Pierre de Beauvau, were wounded, but not seriously. In spite of the reinforcements brought by the Gascon nobles, Castillon could not oppose a long resistance; the town capitulated July 20th. From there the army marched immediately against St. Émilion and Libourne, which opened their gates.[n]

Cadillac and Blanquefort followed suit. The royal army closed in around Bordeaux. The free archers overran the country; the ships loaned by La Rochelle and Brittany blocked the mouth of the Gironde. Bordeaux, threatened with famine, sent deputies to Charles VII. In their presence Jean Bureau made it a point to say to the king: "Sire, I have been reconnoitring for proper positions for our batteries; if such is your pleasure, I promise you on my life that in a few days I shall have demolished the town." The envoys understood that this time they must accept what conditions the king would make. He stripped Bordeaux of her privileges, exacted a contribution of 100,000 crowns and ordered the banishment of twenty guilty citizens with the confiscation of their wealth; finally the construction of two citadels to guarantee the fidelity of the town in the future. The sire de l'Esparre, who had called in the English, promising a rising of all the nobility of the province, lost his head. On the 19th of October, 1453, Charles VII entered Bordeaux in triumph — the Hundred Years' War was over. The English held nothing in France except Calais and two small neighbouring towns.[o]

Thus after a century's struggle was decided the impossibility of English monarchs holding France, under whatever pretensions or rights. The French had outgrown those times when the sovereignty over them could be transmitted to foreigners, or divided with them by the mere laws of feudal heritage or proprietorial descent. All that the ablest kings and bravest

warriors of England could do was to hold their ground upon the continent. Any lack of talent, suspension of vigilance, or remissness of energy on their part restored military superiority to the French upon their own soil, and insured with this their independence.

It was fortunate for both countries that such a decision had taken place, and that it should be final. The circumstances as well as the result of the war now rendered it so. The re-conquest of all the French provinces by Charles was not, like that of Philip Augustus or Philip the Fair, the work of trickery or deceit. It had been achieved in fair and stand-up fight, and, what was more remarkable, with forces on either side almost balanced in number. The French were not more numerous than the English at Formigny; and Talbot, when he fell at Castillon, led a greater army than that which defeated him. It was the French free archers, too, and peasant soldiers, who fought more than the knights on that field. Experience had taught the mistake of attempting to ride down the hardy sons of the soil by mounted gentry. English and French met on these last fields equal in courage and in strength. But as the French soldiers were now more carefully selected, disciplined, and organised, they were victorious over those of England, distracted as it was by civil war, sending forth armies as distracted as its government.*g*

THE LAST YEARS OF CHARLES VII

About this time the services of the wise counsellor we have already mentioned — the great merchant and shipper, Jacques Cœur — were lost to the state. After the conviction of Jean de Xaincoings, receiver-general of the realm, for embezzlement in 1451, Jacques Cœur was accused of malversation in his office of treasurer of the crown. He was said to have heaped up incredible riches; and on some occasions he made a display of his wealth which in a great measure compensated for the evil proceedings, if such they were, by which he gained it. He furnished funds for fleets and armies out of his private stores, when they could not otherwise be had; and continued his sage advices to the king, inculcating economy and repose. Charles was still indolent and self-indulgent when no great national effort was to be made. He allowed the prosecution of his faithful servitor, accepted the sentence of death which was passed upon him, and only started up to the kindness and generosity of his character when he remembered his services, and granted him his life (1453). The rest of the treasurer's story is very strange. Jacques Cœur escaped from prison and found refuge at Rome, was appointed admiral of the Italian fleets against the Saracens, trafficked in goods and money while sweeping the infidels from the sea, and died in the island of Chios, 1456, richer and more honoured than he had ever been in Paris. The king must have seen, when it was too late, that he had banished a financier whose advice on public affairs was cheaply paid for by the acquisition of private riches.*j*

Quarrels with Burgundy and with the Dauphin

The expulsion of the English from the continent, where they no longer held any town save Calais, left the king of France in the presence of his powerful rival, the duke of Burgundy, who reigned over dominions no less vast, and after a manner quite as independent.

After the English had been driven from Normandy, Philip of Burgundy began to feel the hostility of Charles and of his court. Whenever his subjects,

especially of towns, had cause of complaint against him, they appealed to the king of France and his parliament as suzerain. Ghent would not submit to the *gabelle* (or salt tax) imposed by Philip, and the people appealed to the king of France, who pretended that the *gabelle* peculiarly belonged to the suzerain, and a French embassy soon arrived to arbitrate between the duke and the Ghenters. The duke altogether set aside the demand of *gabelle*, but insisted merely on the fact of the chiefs of trades and the demagogues having usurped the entire power in Ghent, even the administration and the election of magistrates. The French envoys took completely the duke's view of the difference, and gave an award, obliging the people of Ghent to admit the ducal bailiffs to a share of authority, to pay a large fine, give up the rallying emblem of the white *chaperon*, and desist from holding the meetings of the united trades.

In the following year, 1452, the French court returned to the charge and sent fresh ambassadors, not approving of the facility with which their predecessors had abandoned and condemned the democracy of Ghent. But at that time occurred the descent of Talbot on the Garonne, and the attention and efforts of Charles were necessarily turned in that direction. Duke Philip saw his opportunity. He must crush the rebellious towns ere Charles succeeded in expelling the English from Guienne. He raised a large army, brought it to Ghent, and captured several small places round it, cruelly hanging every prisoner. Treachery is reported to have been employed to induce the citizens to come forth to battle on the open plain. But 40,000 armed inhabitants of the Flemish capital, so often victorious in the field, scarcely needed any incentives to march to the relief of their towns and garrisons. Duke Philip was engaged in the siege of Gavre, from which the commander escaped to Ghent, craving succour, if the fortress was to be saved. The citizens accordingly mustered to the number of 30,000 and marched to attack the Burgundians. The encounter took place on the 23rd of July, 1453; it began by the cannon on both sides. The Ghenters were most of them slain, 20,000 being left on the field; and the duke, on beholding the heaps of slaughtered men, felt, for the first time, that these were his subjects, the sources of his wealth and the sinews of his strength.

In the same year Muhammed II carried Constantinople by assault, and extinguished the Greek empire in the East. The catastrophe, alarming to Italy and Germany, might well have aroused the king of France. Charles VII was not the hero of a crusade; the sphere of his activity and ambition did not extend so far. Yet, when the duke of Burgundy, in a solemn festivity at Lille, made a public vow to lead his armies against the Turks, when all his noblesse became associated in the same vow, and when the pope and emperor joined in the enterprise, Charles was mortified; nor was his jealousy diminished when Philip, after this vow, set forth in person to visit the Swiss and the Germans, in order to negotiate alliances and aid in his great design.

However wisely the councillors of King Charles had conducted his military operations, and his negotiations with England and with Burgundy, the spirit of their domestic administration was narrow in the extreme. The princes of the blood, however cautious and apparently submissive, looked with jealousy and anger upon those upstarts of the king's court who so completely eclipsed and set them aside.

The king and his council, therefore, looked upon the duke of Burgundy's proposed crusade as merely a scheme for enhancing his importance, and placing himself at the head of the princes of Europe and of a formidable army,

and they resolved to attack and crush those of his subjects whom he supposed to be associates and fellow-conspirators with Duke Philip. The principal of these was his son Louis, who lived independently, but not tranquilly, in Dauphiné, now warring, now intriguing with the duke of Savoy, and omitting no opportunity of gaining followers and procuring money.

The first of the dauphin's friends whom the court attacked was the count d'Armagnac, who afforded every pretext for Charles' interference. He was living in incest, excommunicated by the pope, and guilty of many crimes. Unable to resist Charles' lieutenants, Armagnac was soon reduced, his seventeen castles were taken, and he was driven across the Pyrenees. The court then resolved to make an example of the duke of Alençon. The prince was noted for his gallantry and independent spirit, which had won the admiration of Joan of Arc. He had been foremost as a partisan against the English, yet was an object of suspicion to Charles. Dunois was sent to arrest and bring him to the king's presence, who accused him of conspiring to receive the English into his fortresses. According to some he made an indignant answer to the king; according to others he confessed his treason, and gave information of the designs of his confederates.

By what was elicited from the duke of Alençon, the king's suspicion and anger were increased against his son Louis, whom he resolved to leave no longer in possession of the revenues and government of Dauphiné, at least unless he submitted. In April, 1456, the king signified his intention of resuming the government of that province. The dauphin would not put himself in the power of the council, the members of which he believed capable of any crime. Nor would Charles receive his son into favour, except upon his complete submission. The march of an army, led by his declared enemy, Dammartin, alarmed Louis. He at first thought of resistance, but none of the nobles of Dauphiné or of his court would support him in resistance to his father. With a few followers Louis abruptly quitted Dauphiné, as Dammartin advanced into it, and hastened to St. Claude, in Franche-Comté. From thence he informed the king that he was determined to take part in his uncle the duke of Burgundy's crusade against the Turks. He at the same time informed that potentate of his arrival. An answer of welcome speedily came, and Louis proceeded to Brussels. Here the duke embraced him so cordially and so long, as scarcely, so Chastelain[k] relates, to let his feet touch the earth. The dauphin was all in all for a few days; but a quarrel arising between the duke and his son, the latter was brought by his mother to Louis, who undertook to intercede for him, and remonstrate with his sire. This at once interrupted friendship and harmony. The duke saw in the dauphin one who might take his son's part against him. Louis thus found it necessary to retire to the château of Gennape, near Brussels, where he lived on a monthly pension of 2,500 livres allowed him by the duke (1456–1457).

Death of Charles VII; the Influence of His Reign

This was the very result which Charles most dreaded, and which he most carefully should have avoided. But his council feared the reconciliation between father and son: and some of them meditated setting Louis aside altogether, and prolonging their own power by proclaiming his brother Charles, then but a boy. The king would not entertain a project necessarily so fatal to his family and his kingdom. As to Charles, his inward distrust became at last a malady, and almost an insanity. Yet his suspicions were not without grounds; for as his health and strength visibly declined, especially after the

[1457–1461 A.D.]

breaking of a boil in the mouth, the members of his court — even those who had been the bitterest enemies of the dauphin — addressed letters to that prince containing information as to the state of things, and assurances of their own attachment. Even the king's new mistress, the dame de Villequier,[1] was amongst those who hastened to seek security in the worship of the rising sun.

The desertion of his own ministers did not escape Charles, who reasoned that those who were so eager to abandon him in his decline might, without scruple, hasten his death. The dauphin is said to have caused some of the letters addressed to him to be placed within reach and view of the king. Charles' terror was equal to his disgust. A captain told him that his physicians had been suborned to administer poison; one was instantly sent to prison, whilst the others fled. In his alarm, Charles refrained from taking sustenance altogether; and when the cause of his consequently weak state was discovered, and it was sought to administer food, his stomach refused to retain it. Thus did one of the most successful and triumphant among monarchs expire of mistrust — of hunger and inanition. Death levels all distinctions: Charles, the restorer of the French monarchy, died the death of a beggar (July 22nd, 1461).

The character of Charles VII is perplexing to the historian; it affords subject of surprise that such great aims, which must have been wisely conceived and steadily pursued, should have been attained by a personage in many respects so weak. We are thus obliged to separate the private habits of the prince from the public life of the monarch. In the one Charles was indolent, self-indulgent, inconstant, and immoral; in the other, active, adventurous, persevering, and patriotic. He first introduced the important novelty of a royal council. Such, indeed, had existed under his predecessor, but it was an assemblage of magnates, not of ministers, the orators and inferior members being the followers or exponents of their chiefs' opinions. Charles VII did nothing without consulting his council. This, perhaps, is the most remarkable characteristic of his rule. And it stands in strong contrast with the habits of his son and successor, who ruled altogether from his own judgment, and who with far greater talents and capacity committed the greatest blunders, and fell far short in all his aims, which his sire contrived to avoid or to accomplish, by merely mistrusting his own omniscience and not disdaining the counsels of others.

The upper classes, their ideas, their spirit, and privileges, were no doubt undergoing in this century a great and remarkable change. This was the gradual metamorphosis from the feudal baron and knight into the courtly *seigneur* and the modern gentleman. As their numbers greatly increased it became impossible for all to preserve the superiority in power and wealth which the ancient holders of fiefs had possessed. The younger brothers of the gentry were obliged to seek for public service and live upon pensions or pay, in military or other capacity. But they carefully preserved themselves from losing caste, by insisting that they alone should fill these numerous offices. Thus the originally restricted class of the nobility in France was spread into the wider caste of the *gentilhomme*, the power and pretensions of the whole being undiminished.[g]

Most important of all, however, was the steady growth in power of the crown. We have seen that Charles VII practically dispensed with the aid of

[1 Agnes Sorel had died of dysentery on the 9th of February, 1450. The *dame de Beauté*, as she was called, had her enemies, the dauphin among them, and rumours that she had been poisoned were not long in spreading through the court. These were made use of later in many infamous machinations, even against Jacques Cœur.]

the states-general after 1439, and that in so doing he virtually established a standing army and a permanent tax.[a] In reality the taxes were already permanent, or nearly so, but they had been considered as extra revenue; now they became usual. Charles VII in suppressing the vote of the assembly followed the example of Charles V under identical circumstances, and thus rid himself of an obligation which was often only a useless formality, and often a hindrance and restraint.[e]

A more fatal consequence of this usurpation on the part of the crown was that the nobility and clergy, remaining exempt from the tax on land which was only levied on the property of the *roturiers*, ended by taking no interest in the question. They abandoned the great principles supported at the estates of 1355 and 1356, to wit, that no tax could be levied save with the assent of the estates, and that the three orders should be subjected to the same taxes. Liberty established itself in England because the prelates, nobles, and towns remained closely united in their resistance to the encroachments of royalty, all accepting the same burdens and vindicating the same guarantees. In France the nobility and clergy deserted the common cause, handed over the third estate to the arbitrary authority of the crown, and sold the public liberties for a pecuniary advantage. From that moment it was an admitted formula that the clergy paid with their prayers, the nobility with their swords, the people with their money. The third estate, betrayed by the privileged orders, approached the king, applauded all the attacks made by the crown on the rights of the nobles and clergy, and energetically aided it to consummate the ruin of their power, until the moment that it found itself alone, face to face with the crown, and overthrew it. The defection of the clergy and the nobility was the first cause of the establishment of absolute power and of the Revolution which was accomplished 350 years later.[p]

But little enough did Charles VII or his contemporaries concern themselves with such remote consequences of their deeds as are here ominously suggested; and, not to be ourselves blinded to the true historical relations of the times we are treating, let us seek again the atmosphere of the fifteenth century, and in leaving Charles VII take a parting glance at him through the eyes of a contemporary writer, whose quaint phrasing and peculiar smack of piety will remind us that our stage setting is still of the Middle Ages. That the phrases of the courtier are somewhat more flattering than strict justice demands need neither surprise nor concern us. "Charles VII," says Henry Baude,[o] "was loved as much by his subjects as by foreign nations, who came often to him for advice in settling their disputes, and this because of the great justice that he observed. He was feared by the good and by the wicked: by the good, who were afraid to do evil lest it should come to his knowledge; by the wicked who were afraid of his justice. He was obeyed by his vassals and subjects, and well served by old, wise, and well-tutored servants, who knew his disposition to be such that he wished each to have his own. He died in old age [in reality he was but fifty-nine]; and after his death was in great solemnity, weeping, and lamentation honourably buried, and with great regret by men of all estates, in the church of St. Denis in France, with his ancestors. May God in his holy grace receive his soul into Paradise. Amen."



CHAPTER X

THE REIGN OF LOUIS XI: THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROWN

[1461–1483 A.D.]

> Louis XI, that king more adroit than the most adroit courtier; that old fox furnished with lion's claws; powerful and shrewd, served secretly as in the light, constantly sheltered by his guards as by a shield, and accompanied by his executioners as with a sword. — VICTOR HUGO.

DURING fifteen years, the dauphin, afterwards Louis XI, had maintained a struggle against his father, which had commenced on account of Agnes Sorel and had been continued by mutual distrust. Throughout this struggle the dauphin had shown a most indomitable pride and the utmost tenacity, and in all this delicate and false situation he affected to act as the prince and as the prince who would one day be king. If he rebelled against the king it was against the king only, and not against the crown. Such at least is the attitude revealed by the tone of his letters.

As soon as he succeeded to the throne, he hastened to leave his little court of Gennape and return to France. He asked the duke of Burgundy to lend him an escort of four thousand soldiers in case he should meet with opposition from his father's councillors who might wish to impose their own conditions on him. However, on arriving at Avesnes, the nobility thronged around him to swear allegiance, and, finding his escort unnecessary, he sent it back to the duke. He repaired at once to Rheims to be crowned and at that place the throng became greater. This adulation, which always follows when a new prince succeeds one but little loved, made Louis believe that he would be popular. Perhaps his absence, his exile, which had been interpreted as a protest or a disgrace, had contributed to this apparent popularity. It was, at least, very ephemeral.

Louis XI was thirty-eight years old when he ascended the throne, with his experience of governing and his virtues and vices equally matured by his exile. Like his father, he loved power and did not wish to share it. A contemporary, Chastelain,[b] called him "the universal spider," because he

never ceased weaving a web of which he was the centre, and the threads of which extended everywhere. Not only did he wish to decide everything himself, but he was loath to accept any advice, and the least opposition would make him obstinate. Like his father, also, he was observant, discreet, suspicious, esteeming men but little, rewarding them richly when he had need of their services and forgetting them the day after. He had in this respect the three faults that Chastelain[b] attributes to Charles VII — fickleness, diffidence, and envy. On the other hand he had a wonderful discernment in seeing the use that each person could be to him. Those who served him must serve him absolutely. Independence to him seemed conspiracy. Comines[c] says that he did not like to have serve him "the great ones who could surpass him." He preferred to choose for his agents men of humble birth whom he took from the lowest of his household, knowing them to be more easy to control and capable of a more blind devotion. Reared in the school of Charles VII, he resembled him very much, in spite of the aversion he had shown toward him. He continued his reign and his policy. He employed the same means to maintain, or to extend the results already attained. If he had any advantage over him, it was the knowledge, which he had acquired by personal experience, of the opposition he would be obliged to combat.

At the same time, to these hereditary traits he joined others. He was distinguished by a feverish activity, a perpetual restlessness, an irresistible taste for intriguing. He would complicate affairs on all sides, then meet the difficulties and make light of them. Chastelain[b] describes him as "scheming new thoughts day and night." His government was very secret. He sought the shadowy ways, which makes it difficult for one to follow the thread of his diplomacy, the details of which necessarily escape us. He was educated, like most of the princes of his day. He was possessed of great keenness and vivacity — almost too much, as he very often allowed himself to be carried away by it. He had been surrounded, at Gennape, by a small court, vivacious and refined. He had a certain loftiness in his views, notwithstanding all that the historians have said of his littleness and his superstition. In his relations with the pope he showed a sense of nobility and justice. But these sentiments and qualities, which keep him from being regarded altogether as a bad man, had but little influence on his political conduct. His passion to rule, and to carry on secret intrigues, was so strong that it destroyed all scruples, if he had any. He knew no rule save his own will, no goal but success. He had no respect for established things, but followed the necessity of the moment. He sought to attach men to himself only by corruption, believing that the more corrupt they were the more useful they would prove; he was prodigal with money to gain tools in France and traitors in the neighbouring states. In fact the celebrated portrait of *The Prince*, for which he served as one of the models employed by Macchiavelli,[d] gives a just idea of the personal government, arbitrary and mysterious, which existed in the sixteenth century and which most fortunately is no longer possible, at least under the same conditions.

He has received much praise for his ability. He hastened the progress of the unity, and the ruin of the great feudal houses. The crown acquired important provinces during his reign and he greatly augmented the power of France. These results are incontestable, but at the same time we must remember it was not he alone who brought them about; that these results had been preparing for a long time; that the twenty years of Charles VII had done much; that Louis XI had, in the beginning, compromised by his impru-

dence the conquests of the preceding reign and that his principal merit was to profit, in an incontestable manner, by favourable circumstances. If he has been regarded as a great statesman, it is because, meeting with reverses in the commencement of his reign, he in the end triumphed over his enemies who were less calculating and less prudent than himself. For it is the final success that sways the judgment of posterity, and even the judgment of contemporaries, as is shown by Philip de Comines,[c] that observer so profound, that spirit so penetrating and so cold.[e]

RELATIONS WITH THE CHURCH

After his coronation Louis looked around the land he was now about to "bring into order," and was alarmed at the condition of the national church. A national church it really deserved to be called; for, while confessing the superiority of Rome in antiquity and rank, it rested firmly on the decision of the Council of Bâle, and acknowledged a power superior to the holy see. It defended, also, freedom of election to vacant benefices, and refused the annates, or first year's income of bishoprics and incumbencies, to the exchequer of the pope. Louis saw that the first advance against the citadel of civil liberty was a return to the obedience of Rome. He gave up at once all the franchises and exemptions wrung with such difficulty by the church of France. He placed it again, bound hand and foot, under the heel of the successors of St. Peter, and even gave advantages to the ecclesiastical ruler which he had never held before. In return for this, the faithful son of the church was sure of the pontiff's support. Though he oppressed his subjects, deceived his friends, and murdered his enemies by treachery, he had shown a most religious regard for the interest of the papacy, and was honoured with the title, which his successors have retained, of "the most Christian king." The least Christian monarch of his time, being elevated by popish gratitude to this lofty position, it was only left for the adulation of the courtiers to bestow upon him the title of "majesty," which great word had not yet been applied to the person of the sovereigns of Europe; but Louis XI set the example of claiming the highest sounding and least deserved epithets, and cheated and grovelled through a long reign of trickery and meanness as his Majesty the Most Christian King. When the church was again governed by a foreign master, whom it was easy for the king to win over to his side, the next important step in the progress of his design was to render the people powerless. For this purpose he did away with the free-archers of the previous reign. No village was allowed its butts and shooting-grounds. The parish was relieved of the expense of finding an "archer good" for the interior defence of the country, and the spirit of emulation in warlike sports was discouraged. But the land was not to be left unprotected. So in addition to his Scottish allies, he took into his pay large bodies of Swiss mercenaries, whose valour had struck him with such admiration at the battle of Sankt Jakob near Bâle.

He now more than doubled the taxes; and as, although saving and grasping from personal disposition, he was liberal and even generous from policy, he derived great support from the absence of a home-force of his own subjects, and the devoted adhesion of penniless mountaineers from the two poorest and most courageous populations in Christendom. We will only insert a word of surprise here with regard to the Swiss, that a people who are honoured throughout the world for the defence of their liberties at home, should be the scorn and shame of all generous minds by furnishing their strength and valour for the maintenance of the worst tyrannies abroad.

THE WAR OF THE PUBLIC WEAL

The nobility saw the object of the king, and took arms to prevent the extinction of their order, and the diminution of their individual power. A cry is never wanting when people are determined to quarrel, and as the feudal chiefs could not, with any decency, state openly the reasons of their opposition, they placed it upon the two grounds of the sacrifice of French ecclesiastical liberty by the abrogation of the Pragmatic Sanction, and the intolerable weight of taxation which the new king had imposed. This, therefore, was called "the war of the public weal." Princes and feudatories, and all who had a lingering regard for the grand old days of license and free quarters, took up the patriotic cause. Charles of France, the king's brother, was the nominal chief, but the real head of this league was Charles the Bold [properly Le Téméraire or the Rash], at this time called count of Charolais, eldest son of the good Philip, duke of Burgundy. In the list besides him were read the names of Saint-Pol, Brittany, Lorraine, Alençon, Bourbon, Armagnac, and Dunois. In short, the two parties were perfectly aware of each other's intentions, and met face to face. If the league succeeded, Louis' life would have been short, and a regency was openly promised. If Louis was successful, farewell to the great nobility, its independent power and hereditary magnificence; it must sink into an ornament of the court, or be exterminated altogether. It was the life of one or the other which lay upon the scales; and though the swords were sharpest, and the cause apparently the freest on the side of the great vassals, the cunning, the policy, the perseverance were all on the side of the king. Suddenly the oppressors of the towns, and the harsh masters of country populations, affected a deep interest in the common weal. With haughty condescension they assumed the championship of the overburdened commons, and kept them at the same time from coming "between the wind and their nobility," as if contact with them would have stained their coats of arms. But Louis, dressed in very undignified apparel, looking like a small shopkeeper, and affecting no airs of grandeur or superiority, entered into familiar talk with any well-to-do citizen he encountered, joked with him about his family, poked him under the ribs to give emphasis to his innuendoes, and strolled off to have a merry conversation with somebody else. Nobody could believe that so free-spoken a gentleman cared less for the common people than the prince of Charolais, who would have put a townsman to death if he stood in his way; and in a short time the people liked better to pay their taxes to a man who put them at their ease, than to owe their deliverance to a set of champions who despised them in their hearts and insulted them in their manners.

The Battle of Montlhéry and the Treaty of Conflans

Louis saw his advantage, and tried to gain his object by a battle with the confederates at Montlhéry, where neither party was decidedly victorious.

An account of this battle is given by the continuator of Monstrelet. His description is, however, criticised by another continuator, who professes to have drawn from more reliable sources. The last mentioned chronicler says: "At this battle which was fought on Tuesday the 6th day of July, in the year 1465, the king of France, coming with all haste from beyond Orleans to Paris, halted at early morn at Châtres, under Montlhéry, and that having taken scarcely any refreshment, and without waiting for his escort, which was, for its number, the handsomest body of cavalry ever raised

[1465 A.D.]

in France, he so valiantly attacked the army of the count de Charolais and his Burgundians that he put to the rout the van division. Many of them were slain, and numbers taken prisoners. News of this was speedily carried to Paris, whence issued forth upward of thirty thousand persons, part of whom were well mounted. They fell in with parties of Burgundians who were flying, and made them prisoners; they defeated also those from the villages of Vanvres, Issi, Sevres, St. Cloud, Arcueil, Surennes, and others.

"At this recounter, great booty was gained from the Burgundians, so that their loss was estimated at two hundred thousand crowns of gold. After the van had been thus thrown into confusion, the king, not satisfied with this success, but desirous to put an end to the war, without taking any refreshments or repose, attacked the main body of the enemy with his guards and about four hundred lances: but the Burgundians had then rallied, and advanced their artillery, under the command of the count de Saint-Pol, who did on that day the greatest service to the count de Charolais. The king was hard pressed in his turn, insomuch that at times he was in the utmost personal danger, for he had but few with him, was without artillery, and was always foremost in the heat of the battle; and considering how few his numbers were, he maintained the fight valiantly and with great prowess. It was the common report of the time, that if he had had five hundred more archers on foot, he would have reduced the Burgundians to such a state, that nothing more would have been heard of them in war for some time.

"The count de Charolais, on this day, lost his whole guard, — and the king also lost the greater part of his. The count was twice made prisoner by the noble Geoffroy de Saint Belin and Gilbert de Grassy, but was rescued each time. Towards evening the Scots carried off the king, that he might take some refreshments; for he was tired and exhausted, having fought the whole of the day without eating or drinking, and led him away quietly and without noise, to the castle of Montlhéry. Several of the king's army not having seen him thus led off the field, and missing him, thought he was either slain or taken, and took to flight. For this reason, the count du Maine, the lord admiral De Montaulban, the lord de la Barde, and other captains, with seven or eight hundred lances, abandoned the king in this state, and fled, without having struck a blow during the whole of the day. Hence it is notorious, that if all the royal army who were present at this battle had behaved as courageously as their king, they would have gained a lasting victory over the Burgundians; for the greater part of them were defeated, and put to flight. Many indeed were killed on the king's side, as well as on that of the enemy; for after the battle was ended, there were found dead on the field three thousand six hundred, whose souls may God receive!

"The king of France came to Paris, the 18th day of July, after the battle of Montlhéry, and supped that night at the hôtel of his lieutenant-general, Sir Charles de Melun, — where, according to the account of Robert Gaguin, a large company of great lords, damsels, and citizens' wives supped with him, to whom he related all that had happened at Montlhéry. During the recital, he made use of such doleful expressions that the whole company wept and groaned at his melancholy account. He concluded by saying, that if it pleased God, he would soon return to attack his enemies, and either die or obtain vengeance on them, in the preservation of his rights. He, however, acted differently, having been better advised; but it must be observed, that some of his warriors behaved in a most cowardly manner, — for had they all fought with as much courage as the king, he would have gained a complete victory over his enemies."[p]

Continuing, the chronicler gives an extended account of the events of the ensuing months, during which the allies approached Paris and besieged the city. "The king," he says, "finding that he had many enemies within his realm, considered on the means of procuring additional men-at-arms to those he had, — and it was calculated how many he could raise within Paris; for this purpose, it was ordered that an enrolment should be made of all capable of bearing arms, so that every tenth man might be selected to serve the king. This, however, did not take place, — for such numbers of men-at-arms now joined the king that there was no need of such a measure. The king was very much distressed to get money for the pay of these troops, and great sums were wanted; for those towns which had been assigned for the payment of a certain number of men-at-arms, being now in the possession of the rebellious princes, paid no taxes whatever to the crown, for they would not permit any to be collected in those districts.

"On the 3rd of August, the king, having a singular desire to afford some comfort to the inhabitants of his good town of Paris, lowered the duties on all wines sold by retail within that town, from a fourth to an eighth; and ordained that all privileged persons should fully and freely exercise their privileges as they had done during the reign of his late father, the good Charles VII, whose soul may God pardon! He also ordered that every tax paid in the town, but those on provision, included in the six-revenue farms, which had been disposed of in the gross, should be abolished, namely, the duties on wood-yards, on the sales of cattle, on cloth sold by wholesale, on sea-fish and others; which was proclaimed that same day they were taken off, by sound of trumpets, in all the squares of the town, in the presence of Sir Denis Hesselin, the receiver of the taxes within the said town. On this being made public, the populace shouted for joy, sang carols in the streets, and at night made large bonfires." Such deeds as this illustrate the diplomacy of a king who, whatever else he may have been, was assuredly a consummate politician. Meantime, as practical aids to defence, fires were lighted and a strict watch kept in Paris, and chains were fastened across the principal streets.

The guard kept about Paris was evidently not very strict, for the king was able to go and come at will. There were occasional sallies, but these amounted to nothing more than skirmishes. On the second of September, after several parleys, commissioners were at length named by the king and the confederates to settle their differences. There were numerous meetings which came to no very definite issue, but meantime the statecraft of the king was preparing the way for the final issues.[a]

A truce was proclaimed in the two camps on October 1st; from that day until the 30th, when the articles of peace were registered by the parliament and published, the king continued to show an almost boundless friendship and confidence in his attitude toward the princes and especially toward the count of Charolais. He furnished their camp with supplies, he received their soldiers at Paris, he was present without guards at their military reviews, abandoning himself to their care; finally he acceded to their demands, conditions which seemed to make him wholly dependent upon them.[1] Thirty-six commissioners were appointed by him to reform all the abuses in the kingdom, of which the princes had complained; the past was to be forgotten; no one could blame anyone else for what he had done during the

[1 In reality, Louis only sanctioned what was already lost. He acceded to conditions as they were, awaiting his time to overthrow them. The peace was a part of his political game. Needless to say he had no scruples as to the carrying out of any terms of the treaty that could advantageously be avoided.]

war, and all the confiscations proclaimed by the tribunals were revoked. In exchange for Berri the king gave his brother the duchy of Normandy, with the homage of the duchies of Brittany and Alençon, as a hereditary title in the male line. To the count of Charolais he restored the cities on the Somme which he had so recently bought back, reserving for himself only the right to buy them back again, not from him but from his heirs, for the sum of 200,000 gold crowns. He gave over to him, moreover, as a perpetual possession, Boulogne, Guines, Roye, Péronne, and Montdidier. To the duke of Calabria, regent of Lorraine, Mouzon, Ste. Menehould, Neufchâteau, he gave 100,000 crowns in cash and the pay of five hundred lances for a month.

To the duke of Brittany he granted the royal prerogative, which had been a subject of dispute between them, also a part of the aids; he ceded to him Etampes and Montfort and gave presents to his mistress, the same dame de Villequier who had formerly been mistress of Charles VII. To the duke de Bourbon he gave several seigniories in Auvergne, 100,000 crowns in cash, and the pay of three hundred lances; to the duke de Nemours, the government of Paris and of the Île-de-France, together with a pension and the pay of two hundred lances; to the count d'Armagnac, the castellanies of Rouergue, which he had lost, a pension, and the pay of a hundred lances; to the count de Dunois, the restitution of his domain, a pension, and a company of gendarmes; to the sire d'Albret, various seigniories on his frontier. He gave back to the sire de Lohéac the office of marshal with two hundred lances; he made Tannegui du Châtel master of the horse; De Beuil was made admiral; the count of Saint-Pol constable. Finally he pardoned Antoine de Chabannes, count of Dammartin, gave back all his estates, and granted him a company of a hundred lances. Such were the principal clauses of the Treaty of Conflans, which was the most humiliating that rebel subjects ever extorted from a crown, and also the most degrading for the character of the allied princes, because they concluded a war which they had undertaken under the pretext of the public good, by sharing the spoils of the people as well as those of the king.*g*

POLITICAL INTRIGUES

Louis now commenced one of the games which must have given him as much enjoyment as if he had been playing a game of chess. How to move a castle to resist a knight, or a number of pawns to surround a bishop, how to keep Normandy in order by stirring up the enmity of Brittany, how to paralyse the motions of the young duke of Burgundy — for in 1467 Charolais succeeded his father[1] — by inciting insurrections among the men of Liège — these were the problems worked out in the solitude of his own thoughts;

[[1] The famous chronicle*p* of Enguerrand de Monstrelet ends with an account of the death of the duke of Burgundy. He says: "On the 12th day of June, in the year 1467, the noble duke Philip of Burgundy was seized with a grievous malady, which continued unabated until Monday, the 15th, when he rendered his soul to God, between nine and ten o'clock at night. When he perceived, on the preceding day, that he was growing worse, he sent for his son, the count de Charolais, then at Ghent, who hastened to him with all speed; and on his arrival, about mid-day of the Monday, at the duke's palace in Bruges, he went instantly to the chamber where the duke lay sick in bed, but found him speechless. He cast himself on his knees at the bedside, and, with many tears, begged his blessing, and that, if he had ever done anything to offend him, he would pardon him. The confessor, who stood at the bedside, admonished the duke, if he could not speak at least to show some sign of his good will. At this admonition, the good duke kindly opened his eyes, took his son's hand, and squeezed it tenderly, as a sign of his pardon and his blessing. The count, like an affectionate child, never quitted the duke's bed until he had given up the ghost. May God, out of his mercy, receive his soul, pardon his transgressions, and admit him into Paradise!"]

for he boasted that he formed all his plans without the aid of others. The marshal De Brézé said, accordingly, that the horse the king rode was a much stronger animal than it looked, for it carried the whole council on its back. The results of the deliberations of this unanimous assemblage were soon visible in the vengeance which fell on the heads of the late confederacy. Charles of France, when all the others were getting lofty offices and rewards, had been presented with the dukedom of Normandy. The people of Rouen, who had at first taken part against the crown, received the first prince of the blood with acclamations, as a champion of their cause; and the king determined to show them they had chosen the wrong side. He raised an army, and hurried down to Caen; bought and bullied the duke of Brittany, whom he found in that town, out of his friendship with Charles; and then fell upon the capital of the duchy, as if it had been in open rebellion. His right-hand man on this, as on similar occasions, was the famous Tristan l'Hermite, the executioner. Tristan's hands were soon full, for the king, with a vigorous impartiality which showed he was not a bigot to either side, cut off the heads of the aristocracy who had helped the princes, and threw hundreds of the commonalty, who had grumbled at his taxes, into the Seine.

The church, which he had bought over by the sacrifice of the Pragmatic Sanction, and still kept in awe by threatening to restore it — as he had engaged to do by the treaty with the leaguers — was next to be taught that, however much he prized its friendship as a politician, its loftiest officers were the mere creatures of his breath. The system he pursued of excluding the higher orders from civil employments had been introduced into ecclesiastical affairs. Wherever the sharp eye of Louis detected a fitting instrument for his purpose in the person of a penniless adventurer, or townsman of the lowest rank, he was very soon invested with the necessary authority, and perverted justice in the character of president of a court, or vilified religion in the office of a bishop. The son of a small tradesman of the name of La Balue had early shown such amazing want of principle, combined with quickness of talent and audacious self-reliance, that he gained the notice of the king, then his confidence, then his friendship. The pope made great efforts to win over this ornament of the faith, who was now bishop of Évreux, and promised him the cardinal's hat if he persuaded his master to enregister the suppression of the Pragmatic Sanction in the rolls of parliament; and in foolish reliance on the promises of La Balue, sent him the blushing sign of his dignity before the service was performed. La Balue relaxed in his endeavours, as his wages were already received, and gained additional favour with the king for ceasing to trouble him on the subject. The favour continued for a long time, but at last, when Louis, in reliance on his powers of persuasion, and the counsels of his friends, trusted himself again within the power of Charles of Burgundy, and hoped to win him over as he had done in the former interview which destroyed the league of the Public Weal, the advice given by the cardinal was found to lead to very dangerous results.

THE STRUGGLE WITH CHARLES THE BOLD

This visit of Louis to the redoubtable Charles was one of the most famous incidents of his reign. Louis went with meagre attendance to Péronne, and placed himself entirely within the power of Charles. He of course had a safe conduct, but considering the morals of the time, this by no means insured him a safe return. His anomalous act has been variously criticised. On its face it seems foolhardy; yet rightly considered it speaks for the keen intel-

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ligence and practical political sagacity of the king quite as much as for his personal courage. The truth seems to be that Louis at this time felt that he could not trust his officers. Dammartin, his right-hand man, was, as we have seen, a soldier who had been in the employ of Louis' father, and therefore at that earlier period had been in antagonism with Louis himself. His exact attitude of mind could not be known to the king, and the loyalty of various other officers was more than questionable. And to win battles loyal soldiers are absolutely necessary. On the other hand, in the field of diplomacy the king, acting as his own emissary, could feel sure of his results, in proportion as he felt confidence in his own powers. And he had every reason to trust his own sagacity. He knew himself more than a match for Charles in matters of intrigue, and in thus putting his antagonist upon his honour, and appearing to trust him, he doubtless felt that he paved the way most advantageously for his future movements. The visit did not turn out triumphantly, as we shall see, but its ill success was perhaps largely due to an incident beyond the king's control. We may best gain an idea of the incidents of this famous visit through the narrative of the celebrated chronicler Comines, who at this time was in the employ of Burgundy and who afterwards became still more famous as the minister to Louis himself. Comines,[c] as Sismondi[g] says, "considered history as a lesson in politics, not as a catalogue of events"; but here he confines himself chiefly to the narrative, letting the story point its own moral.[a]

Comines describes the Visit to Péronne (1468 A.D.)

It was agreed [says Comines] that the king should come to Péronne. Thither he came, without any guard, more than the passport and parole of the duke of Burgundy; only he desired that the duke's archers, under the command of the lord des Quedes (who was then in the duke's service), might meet and conduct him; and so it was done, very few of his own train coming along with him. However, his majesty was attended by several persons of great quality and distinction, and among the rest by the duke de Bourbon, the cardinal his brother, and the count of Saint-Pol, constable of France, who had no hand in this interview, but was highly displeased at it; for he was now grown haughty, and disdained to pay that respect to the duke which he had formerly done; for which cause there was no love between them. Besides these, there came the cardinal Balue, the governor of Roussillon, and several others. When the king came near, the duke went out (very well attended) to meet him, conducted him into the town, and lodged him at the receiver's, who had a fine house not far from the castle; for the lodgings in the castle were but small, and no way convenient.

War between two great princes is easily begun, but very hard to be composed, by reason of the accidents and consequences which often follow; for many secret practices are used, and orders given out on both sides to make the greatest efforts possible against the enemy, which cannot be easily countermanded as evidently appears by these two princes, whose interview was so suddenly determined that, neither having time to notify it to their ministers in remote parts, they went on performing the commands which their respective masters had given them before. The duke of Burgundy had sent for his army out of Burgundy, in which at that time there was abundance of the nobility; and among the rest the count of Bresse, the bishop of Geneva, and the count of Romont, all three brothers of the house of Savoy (for between the Savoyards and Burgundians there was always a firm amity), and some Germans, who were borderers upon both their territories. And you must

know that the king had formerly imprisoned the count of Bresse, upon the account of two gentlemen whom he had put to death in Savoy, so that there was no right understanding between him and the king.

In this army there were likewise one Monsieur du Lau (who had been a favourite of the king's, but upon some disgust had been kept afterwards a prisoner by him a long time, till at length he made his escape and fled into Burgundy), the lord d'Urfé, since master of the horse to the king of France, and the lord Poncet de Rivière; all which company arrived before Péronne as the king came into the town. Bresse and the last three entered the town with St. Andrew's cross upon their clothes (supposing they should have been in time enough to have paid their respects to the duke of Burgundy, and to have attended him when he went out to receive the king), but they came a little too late; however, they went directly to the duke's chamber to pay their duty, and in the name of the rest, the count of Bresse humbly besought his highness that himself and his three companies might have his protection (notwithstanding the king was in the town), according to the promise he was pleased to make them in Burgundy; and at the same time assured him they were at his service, when and against whomsoever he might command them. The duke returned them thanks, and promised them protection. The rest of this army, under the command of the marshal of Burgundy, encamped by the duke's orders in the fields. The marshal had no more affection for the king than the above-mentioned gentlemen had; for the king had given him the government of Épinal in Lorraine, and taken it from him afterwards to give it to John, duke of Calabria. The king had notice presently of all these persons being in the town, and of the habits in which they arrived, which put him into a great consternation; so that he sent to the duke of Burgundy to desire he might be lodged in the castle, for he knew those gentlemen were his mortal enemies; the duke was extremely glad to hear it, appointed him his own lodgings, and sent to him to bid him fear nothing.

But the king at his coming to Péronne had quite forgot his sending of two ambassadors to Liège to stir them up to a rebellion against the duke,[1] and they had managed the affair with such diligence that they had got together such a considerable number, that the Liègeois went privately to Tongres (where the bishop of Liège and the lord of Humbercourt were quartered with more than two thousand men) with a design to surprise them. The bishop, the lord of Humbercourt, and some of the bishop's servants were taken, but the rest fled and left whatever they had behind them, as despairing to defend themselves. After which action the Liègeois marched back again to Liège, which is not far from Tongres; and the lord of Humbercourt made an agreement for his ransom with one Monsieur William de Ville, called by the French Le Sauvage, a knight, who, suspecting the Liègeois would kill him in their fury, suffered the lord of Humbercourt to escape, but was slain himself not long after. The people were exceedingly overjoyed at the taking of their bishop. There were also taken with him that day several canons of the church, whom the people equally hated, and killed five or six of them for their first repast; among the rest there was one Monsieur Robert, an intimate friend of the bishop's, and a person I have often seen attending him armed at all points, for in Germany this is the custom of the prelates. They slew this Robert in the bishop's presence, cut him into small pieces, and in sport threw them

[1 Legeay,[k] in his *Histoire de Louis XI, son siècle, ses exploits, etc.*, defends Louis against the charge of having incited the Liègeois to revolt, in opposition to most of the other French historians.]

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at one another's heads. Before they had marched seven or eight leagues, which was their full journey, they killed about sixteen canons and other persons, the majority of whom were the bishop's servants; but they released some of the Burgundians, for they had been privately informed that some overtures of peace had already been made, and they were forced to pretend that what they had done was only against their bishop, whom they brought prisoner along with them into their city. Those who fled (as I said before) gave the alarm to the whole country, and it was not long before the duke had the news of it.

It was said by some that all of them were put to the sword; others affirmed the contrary (for in things of that nature, one messenger seldom comes alone); but there were some who had seen the habits of the canons who were slain, and supposing the bishop and the lord of Humbercourt had been of the number, they positively averred that all that had not escaped were killed, and that they had seen the king's ambassadors among the Liègeois, and they mentioned their very names. All this being related to the duke, he gave credit to it immediately; and falling into a violent passion against the king, he charged him with a design of deluding him by coming thither; ordered the gates both of the town and castle to be suddenly shut up, and gave out, by way of pretence, that it was done for the discovery of a certain casket which was lost, and in which there were money and jewels to a very considerable value. When the king saw himself shut up in the castle, and guards posted at the gates, and especially when he found himself lodged near a certain tower, in which a count of Vermandois had caused his predecessor, one of the kings of France, to be put to death,[1] he was in great apprehension. I was at that time waiting upon the duke of Burgundy in the quality of chamberlain, and (when I pleased) I lay in his chamber, as was the custom of that family. When he saw the gates were shut, he ordered the room to be cleared, and told us who remained that the king was come thither to circumvent him; that he himself had never approved of the interview, but had complied purely to gratify the king; then he gave us a relation of the passages at Liège, how the king had behaved himself by his ambassadors, and that all his forces were killed. He was much incensed, and threatened his majesty exceedingly; and I am of opinion that if he had then had such persons about him as would have fomented his passion, and encouraged him to any violence upon the king's person, he would certainly have done it, or at least committed him to the tower. None was present at the speaking of these words but myself and two grooms of his chamber, one of whom was called Charles de Visen, born at Dijon, a man of honour, and highly esteemed by his master. We did not exasperate, but soothed his temper as much as possibly we could. Some time after he used the same expressions to other people; and the news being carried about the town, it came at last to the king's ear, who was in great consternation; and indeed so was everybody else, foreseeing a great deal of mischief, and reflecting on the variety of things which were to be managed for the reconciling of a difference between two such puissant princes, and the errors of which both of them were guilty in not giving timely notice to their ministers employed in their remote affairs, which must of necessity produce some extraordinary and surprising result.

The king thought himself (as I said before) a prisoner in the castle of Péronne, as he had good reason to do; for all the gates were shut and

[1 King Charles the Simple. He died in prison at Péronne in 929.]

guarded by such as were deputed to that office, and continued so for two or three days; during which time the duke of Burgundy saw not the king, neither would he suffer but very few of his majesty's servants to be admitted into the castle, and those only by the wicket; yet none of them was forbidden, but of the duke's none was permitted to speak with the king, or come into his chamber, at least such as had any authority with their master. The first day there was great murmuring and consternation all over the town. The second, the duke's passion began to cool a little, and a council was called, which sate the greater part of that day and night too. The king made private applications to all such as he thought qualified to relieve him, making them large promises, and ordering 15,000 crowns to be distributed among them; but the agent who was employed in this affair acquitted himself very ill, and kept a good part of the money for his own use, as the king was informed afterwards. The king was very fearful of those who had been formerly in his service, who, as I said before, were in the Burgundian army, and had openly declared themselves for his brother, the duke of Normandy.

The duke of Burgundy's council were strangely divided in their opinions; the greatest part advised that the passport which the duke had given the king should be kept, provided his majesty consented to sign the peace as it was drawn up in writing. Some would have him prisoner as he was, without further ceremony. Others were for sending with all speed to the duke of Normandy, and forcing the king to make such a peace as should be for the advantage of all the princes of France. Those who proposed this advised that the king should be restrained, and a strong guard set upon him, because a great prince is never, without great caution, to be set at liberty after so notorious an affront. This opinion was so near prevailing, that I saw a person booted and ready to depart, having already several packets directed to the duke of Normandy in Brittany, and he waited only for the duke's letters; and yet this advice was not followed. At last the king caused overtures to be made, and offered the duke de Bourbon, the cardinal his brother, the constable of France, and several others, as hostages, upon condition that, after the peace was concluded, he might return to Compiègne, and that then he would either cause the Liègeois to make sufficient reparation for the injury they had done, or declare war against them. Those whom the king had proposed for his hostages proffered themselves very earnestly, at least in public; I know not whether they said as much in private; I expect they did not: and, if I may speak my thoughts, I believe that the king would have left them there, and that he would never have returned.

The third night after this had happened, the duke of Burgundy did not pull off his clothes, but only threw himself twice or thrice upon the bed, and then got up again and walked about, as his custom was when anything vexed him. I lay that night in his chamber, and walked several turns with him. The next morning he was in a greater passion than ever, threatening exceedingly, and ready to put some great thing in execution; but, at last, he recollected himself, and it came to this result: that if the king would swear to the peace, and accompany him to Liège, and assist him to revenge the injuries which they had done him and the bishop of Liège, his kinsman, he would be contented. Having resolved on this, he went immediately to the king's chamber, to acquaint him with his resolutions himself. The king had some friend or other who had given him notice of it before, and who had assured him that his person would be in no manner of danger, provided he would consent to those points; but that, if he refused, he would run himself into so great danger that nothing in the world could be greater.

[1468 A.D.]

When the duke came into his presence, his voice trembled by the violence of his passion, so inclinable was he to be angry again.[1] However, he made a low reverence with his body, but his gesture and words were sharp, demanding of the king if he would sign the peace as it was agreed and written, and swear to it when he had done. The king replied he would; and, indeed, there was nothing added to what had been granted in the treaty at Paris, which was to the advantage of the dukes of Burgundy or Normandy, but very much to his own; for it was agreed that the lord Charles of France should renounce the duchy of Normandy, and have Champagne and Brie, and some other places adjacent, as an equivalent. Then the duke asked him if he would go along with him to Liège, to revenge the treachery they had practised by his instigation, and by means of that interview. Then he put him in mind of the nearness of blood between the king and the bishop of Liège, who was of the house of Bourbon. The king answered that, when the peace was sworn, which he desired exceedingly, he would go with him to Liège, and carry with him as many or as few forces as he pleased. The duke was extremely pleased at his answer, and the articles being immediately produced and read, and the true cross which St. Charlemagne was wont to use, called "the cross of victory," taken out of the king's casket, the peace was sworn, to the great joy and satisfaction of all people; and all the bells in the town were rung. The duke of Burgundy immediately despatched a courier with the news of this conclusion of peace into Brittany, and with it he sent a duplicate of the articles, that they might see he had not deserted them, nor disengaged himself from their alliance; and, indeed, Duke Charles, the king's brother, had a good bargain, in respect of what he had made for himself in the late treaty in Brittany, by which there was nothing left him but a bare pension, as you have heard before. Afterwards the king did me the honour to tell me that I had done him some service in that pacification.c

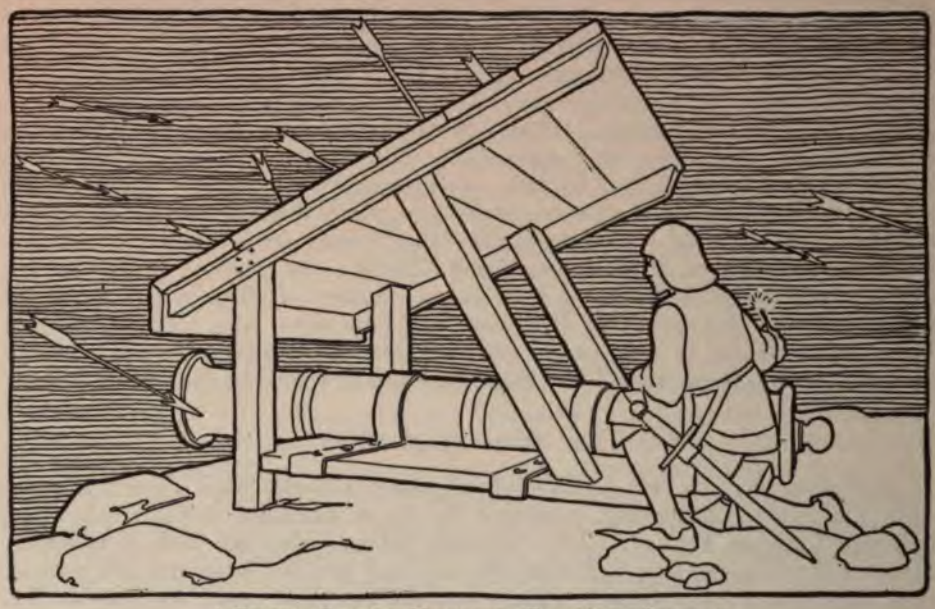
The Storming of Liège

The next day the two princes left together, Charles with his army, Louis with his modest following, increased by three hundred soldiers whom he had sent for from France. They arrived before Liège the 27th of October. Since Duke Charles' last victories the city had neither ramparts nor moats; nothing seemed easier than to enter; but the besieged could not believe that King Louis was a sincere ally of the duke of Burgundy. They made a sortie, crying: "Long live the king! Long live France!" Their surprise was great when they saw Louis advance in person, the cross of St. André of Burgundy on his hat, and heard him exclaim: "Long live Burgundy!" Among the French themselves who were about the king, some were shocked; they could not be resigned to so little pride and to so much effrontery in the deceit. Louis himself paid no attention to their humour and kept repeating: "When pride prances in front, shame and disaster follow close at hand."

The surprise of the people of Liège was turned into indignation. They resisted more energetically and for a longer time than had been expected; confident of their strength, the besiegers guarded themselves badly; the

[1 "As soon as the king saw the duke enter his chamber, he could not conceal his fear, and said to the duke, 'My brother, am I not safe in your house and in your country?' And the duke answered, 'Yes, sire; and so safe that if I saw an arrow coming towards you, I would put myself in front to shield you.' And the king said to him, 'I thank you for your good will, and will go whither I have promised you; but I pray you that peace may be from this time sworn between us.'" — OLIVIER DE LA MARCHE.A]

besieged increased the number of their sorties. One night Charles was informed that his people had just been attacked in a suburb they occupied and were fleeing. He mounted his horse, gave orders not to awaken the king, betook himself alone to the scene of combat, re-established order, and returned to tell Louis what had happened, the latter appearing very much pleased over the affair. At another time the night was dark and rainy: towards midnight a general attack awakened the whole Burgundian camp; the duke was soon afoot; an instant later the king arrived; the disorder was great. "The people of Liège came out on that side," said some. "No, it was by this gate," said others; nothing was certain, no order was given. Charles was impetuous and brave, but became easily alarmed. His followers were not a little worried not to see him put on a more cheerful countenance before the king. Louis on the other hand was cool and calm, firm in giv-



A French Cannon, Middle of Fifteenth Century

ing his orders, and prompt to take authority wherever he might be. "Take what people you have," he said to the constable Saint-Pol who accompanied him, "and go in this direction; if they are to come upon us, they will pass on that side." It was discovered afterwards that it had been a false alarm.

Two days later the situation was more serious; the inhabitants of a canton bordering the city, and called Franchemont, decided to make a desperate attempt and to fall unexpectedly upon the very quarter in which the two princes were lodged. One evening, at ten o'clock, six hundred men went out through one of the breaches in the wall, all of them men of stout heart and well armed. The duke's house was the first to be attacked; twelve archers alone kept watch below and were playing at dice. Charles was in bed; Comines quickly helped him on with his helmet and cuirass; they went down the stairs; the archers were with difficulty preventing an entrance through the door; reinforcements arrived; the danger disappeared. The lodging of King Louis had also been attacked; but at the first sound the Scotch archers

[1468 A.D.]

had hastened to the scene, had surrounded their master, and repulsed the attack, without troubling themselves to see whether their arrows killed the people of Liège or the Burgundians who had come to help. Almost all the braves of Franchemont perished in the enterprise they had undertaken. The duke and his chief leaders held a council the next day; the duke wanted to make an attack. The king was not present at this council; when informed as to what had been decided upon in it, he was not in favour of an assault. "You see," he said, "the courage of this people; you know how much slaughter and uncertainty there is in a fight among the streets of a city; you will lose in it many useful men. Wait two or three days; the people of Liège will without doubt come to terms." Almost all the Burgundian chiefs shared the king's opinion. The duke became angry. "He wants to save the people of Liège," he said; "what peril is there in an assault? There is no wall; they cannot put one single piece of artillery into action; I shall certainly not give up making an attack. If the king is afraid, let him go to Namur." The insult shocked even the Burgundians. Louis was informed of it and said nothing. The next day, October 30th, 1468, the order for the assault was given; the duke marched at the head of his troops; the king came up. "Stay behind," said Charles to him, "do not needlessly expose yourself to peril; I will have you informed when it is time." "My brother," returned Louis, "do you march in advance; you are the most fortunate prince alive; I follow you," and he continued to march with him.

The assault was useless; discouragement had taken hold of the people of Liège; the bravest of them had perished. It was a Sunday; the people who were left were not expecting an attack. "The cloth was laid in every house; all were preparing to sit down to dinner." The Burgundians advanced through deserted streets; Louis marched quietly, surrounded by his men and crying, "Long live Burgundy!" The duke came back to join him and together they went to thank God in the cathedral of St. Lambert. It was the only church preserved from the fury and pillaging of the Burgundians; at noon there was nothing more left to take, either in the houses or churches. Louis heaped Charles with congratulations and compliments. The duke was charmed and mollified. The next day as they were conversing together: "My brother," said the king to the duke, "if you have any further need of my assistance, do not spare me; but if you have nothing further for me to do, it is fitting that I return to Paris in order to proclaim in my court of parliament the arrangement we have agreed upon; otherwise it runs the risk of becoming invalid; you know that that is the custom of France. Next summer we must meet again: you will come to your duchy of Burgundy; I shall go to visit you, and we will pass a month together joyously in making good cheer." Charles answered nothing, sent for the treaty which they had concluded shortly before at Péronne, and gave the king his choice of confirming or abandoning it, excusing himself in veiled terms for having thus forced him and led him about. The king appeared to be satisfied with the treaty, and the 2nd of November, 1468, the second day after the capture of Liège, he left for France. The duke accompanied him half a league out from the city. As they were on the point of taking leave of each other, the king said to him: "If perchance my brother Charles, who is in Brittany, is not pleased with the partition I have made him, out of love for you, what do you want me to do?" "If he does not want to take it," answered the duke, "do you take measures to satisfy him; I will leave the matter to you two." Louis asked for nothing more; he returned home free and confident in his own powers, "after having passed the three hardest weeks of his life."[1]

The Return of Louis to France

To appreciate the import of the promises which Charles had exacted from the king, it must be recalled that Champagne and Brie, which Louis promised to transfer to his brother, were geographically so situated as to separate—or unite—the duchy of Burgundy and the northern possessions of Charles the Bold. Hence Charles' interest in having this territory controlled by his friend, the king's brother, rather than by his enemy, the king. Quite as obviously, Louis' interests were opposed to such an arrangement, and of course he had no intention of fulfilling his agreement. But he wished to avoid fulfilment in the most diplomatic manner possible. This he accomplished by persuading his weak-minded brother to take the territory of Guienne instead of that specified in the compact with Charles. Thus Louis' brother was separated by all France from the duke of Burgundy instead of being his nearest neighbour; and Champagne continued a barrier, not a bridge, between the Burgundian possessions. So in the end the diplomacy of Louis stood him in good stead, notwithstanding his momentary discomfiture.[a]

Louis' bearing was far from proud when he recrossed the frontier. He had received two great checks from the Burgundian power; in 1465 a check of power, in 1468 a check of honour. Had it been only a question of honour Louis might have easily consoled himself; but, aside from honour, his reputation as an able ruler came into question. It was that which made him ill from shame. He knew his contemporaries. The treason to and the sacrifice of Liège troubled him less than his blunder at Péronne. It was not so much indignation as mockery that he dreaded. Paris received from him an order to neither speak, write, paint, or sing anything of the detested name of "Monseigneur de Bourgoyne," and an order was sent out that all birds, magpies, crows, starlings, who were making the streets resound with allusions to the king's discomfiture at Péronne, should be delivered to a commissioner of the king.[j] At least so runs the story.

When Louis arrived in Paris strange discoveries awaited him. He intercepted letters from his favourite the cardinal. He found that his friend and gossip was the friend and gossip also of the duke of Burgundy, the adviser of all that had happened at Péronne, especially of his forced presence at the siege, the degrading clauses of the final treaty, and the general harshness of his treatment. He found at the same time that the cardinal was in correspondence with his brother Charles, late leader of the league, who was still in resistance to his authority; and, in short, that he was betrayed in every point. The king was offended at the perjury of his subject, but the man was a thousand times more angry at the error in his judgment. The son of the tailor, in the red stockings, had outwitted the son of St. Louis with the crown on his head. La Balue, though prince of the church and bishop of a diocese, was imprisoned in an iron cage, about eight feet square, and kept like a wild beast in his den for eleven years in the castle of Loches. All that can be said in extenuation of this pitiless proceeding was that the man was the disgrace of his order and his country, and that the instrument of his torture (as the natural justice of mankind is so prone to make out in other instances) was of his own invention.

There were some institutions, as well as individuals, which it was now Louis' purpose to get within his power. Edward III of England, reposing upon the laurels of Crécy, had founded the order of the Garter in 1349. John of France, in rapid imitation, as we have already seen, founded the order of the Star. Philip of Burgundy had founded the order of the Golden

[1469–1470 A.D.]

Fleece in 1429, and the principles of all these lordly confederations were derived from the ideas of chivalry which the romances had spread among the people. They were to be brotherhoods of noble knights, bound together by the bonds of mutual honour; they were to succour the weak, bridle the strong, and pay honour, as they fantastically expressed it, by purity of life and courage of conduct, to God and their ladies. But the Garter was a foreign badge; the Golden Fleece was a symbol of his subject and liegeman; the Star had fallen into disrepute from its promiscuous distribution among the favourites of the crown; and Louis XI determined on instituting an order of chivalry himself.

It was to be select in its membership, limited in its number, generous in its professions, and he fondly hoped the Garter and Fleece would soon sink into insignificance compared to the order of St. Michael. The first brethren were named from the highest families in France; the remaining great feudatories, who had preserved some relics of their hereditary independence, were fixed upon to wear this mark of the suzerain's friendship. But when they came to read the oaths of admission, they found that the order of St. Michael was in reality a bond of stronger obligation than the feudal laws had ever enjoined. It was a solemn association for the prevention of disobedience to the sovereign. The members were to swear submission in all things to the chief of the order; they were to enter into no agreements with each other, or anyone else, without the king's consent; they were to submit to such punishment, in case of breach of the rules, as the order might appoint; and, in short, the brotherhood of noble knights sank, in the degrading treatment of its founder, into a confederation of spies. Armed with this new weapon, the king tried its effect on the duke of Brittany, who was discontented with many things that had occurred. If he accepted, he would be bound by the statutes; if he refused, it would be an insult to the dignity of the king. The duke temporised, and consulted the duke of Burgundy. The fiery Charles saw through the design, and swore to defend his neighbour in case of a quarrel with the crown. Louis, nothing daunted, sent the collar of the order to Burgundy himself. Burgundy refused it, and Louis' object was gained. He discovered who was bold or strong enough to stand out against him, and the war began. Not openly — it was not yet time to make it a matter of national honour — but the angry subject and hostile king were perfectly aware of each other's designs.

Edward IV of England aids Charles the Bold

Their animosity first broke out in the sides they chose in the great struggle then going on in England, called the Wars of the Roses. Edward of York, representing the direct line of Edward III, had taken arms against the feeble and dissolute Henry VI of the Lancastrian house. Margaret of Anjou had mingled in the fray, and embittered it. We know how fortune alternately swayed to the red and the white of the emblematic flowers. Warwick, who is known in English history as the "king-maker," had just established Edward IV on the throne, and then failed, when he had quarrelled with the monarch he had set up, in restoring Henry. While preparing an expedition for this purpose in France, he had fitted out privateers, who enriched themselves equally on the English and Flemish traders, and then found refuge in the French harbours. Charles of Burgundy complained; Louis retorted with accusations of his having aided the new king of England in his attacks on the coasts of Normandy, and of having accepted the English order of the Garter, though he had refused his own St. Michael. He summoned the vassal

to appear before his parliament in Paris, and the vassal threw the summoners into prison. Louis saw the game now in his hands. He had put his enemy legally in the wrong, and, moreover, he had all the counsellors, and favourites, and warriors, by whom Charles was surrounded, in his pay. We need not, however, waste much pity on the duke. He was nearly in the same situation with regard to the courtiers and officers of the king. When the armies lay face to face, and famine had almost placed the Burgundians in Louis' hands, Charles sent a flag of truce with a statement and proofs of the infidelity of half the princes and feudatories who commanded the royal troops. Charles of France, now duke of Guienne, was at the head of the deceivers, and was anxious to gain Charles' good-will, in hopes of obtaining the hand of his daughter and heiress, Mary of Burgundy. Battle, with traitors commanding both the armies, would have been madness, and Louis agreed to a truce. Bitterer thoughts than ever, about the pride and falsehood of the nobility, rankled in that ignoble heart. Another incident soon occurred that brought affairs to a crisis. One of his spies, being in the castle of the count de Foix, saw a mass of torn papers in a corner of his room, which had previously been occupied by a messenger of the duke of Burgundy. The man gathered up the fragments, saw a name or two that excited his attention, pasted them all together, and was enabled to present to the king a bond of firm alliance, and the signatures of enemies whom he might well have trembled to see united against him — Edward of England, triumphant at the battle of Barnet, where his enemy Warwick was slain, and now firmly established on the English throne; the duke of Burgundy, Nicholas of Lorraine, the duke of Brittany, and, above all, Charles of France, duke of Guienne. These were all to be on him at once, and, as one of the papers said, were to set so many greyhounds at his heels that he could not know where to fly for safety.



FRENCH GUNNER, MIDDLE OF FIFTEENTH CENTURY

Louis, however, was more of the fox than the hare. He doubled on his pursuers, and tempted the duke of Burgundy with the promise of restoring him some towns on the Somme, and letting him have his full revenge on his

former favourite, the constable Saint-Pol, who had betrayed him to the king. Charles, on the other hand, was to let Louis do as he chose with the dukes of Brittany and Guienne.[f] The duke of Guienne, indeed, was not likely to be an annoyance much longer to his brother the king, for he was seized of a mortal malady, presumably consumption. He died May 24th, 1472, at Bordeaux. There was a rumour current that he had been poisoned along with his mistress the lady of Monsoreau, by the abbé of St. Jean d'Angély, at the instance of Louis himself. The story of a peach, cut with a poisoned knife and shared by the lovers, became famous. There were many suspicious circumstances, and very likely the king may have watched the progress of his brother's illness "with ill-disguised hope" as Martin[j] suggests; but the fact that the duke had suspected no one during his long illness and had named Louis as his executor may perhaps justify us in giving the king the benefit of the doubt for the nonce. "Examples of fratricide are all too common in this sinister century," says Martin; but he adds, half doubtingly, that "the best justification of the king appears to lie in the long illness of his brother. A man poisoned with fruit does not survive eight months." In any case, the death of the duke removed one of the most important obstacles to Louis' plans for the centralisation of power and the ultimate autocracy of the crown.[a]

Now, then, there was to be war to the knife carried on by the crown against the nobility. Burgundy was bought off by promises and gifts; England was soothed by concessions. But within the boundaries of France itself, no limit was put to the vengeance and cruelty of the king. He arrested the duke of Alençon in full peace, and immured him in a dungeon in Paris. He sent an army into the territories of the count d'Armagnac, and a detachment of it burst into his house, and murdered him in his bed. They also forced his wife, who was pregnant, to drink a mixture which produced immediate death. His brother was thrown into the Bastille, and kept in a cave below the level of the Seine, so that the water penetrated the floor. The wretched prisoner lived for eleven years in this manner, without shoes or proper clothing; and when released at the end of that time, on the accession of Charles VIII, was found to have fallen into a state of fatuity. A short cessation in this career of murder and revenge was produced by a new combination against Louis' life and crown. French honour and patriotism had now fallen so low that the princes and great vassals, in order to get revenge upon their oppressor, agreed to assign the crown of France to Edward IV of England. He was to be crowned at Rheims, and already he bestowed rewards upon his adherents as if he were in possession of the kingdom. The treaty united many contending factions, with but one object in common — the destruction of him whom all now knew to be their destroyer.

Gold and Diplomacy make Louis the Victor

Burgundy and Brittany and Saint-Pol forgot their animosities, and signed the bond. But Louis detected the plot. The old plans were tried, and succeeded. Promises scattered the confederates, and they became distrustful of each other. Edward had disembarked in France at the head of an English army. Louis sent for great bags of coined money from Paris, and signed several papers, with the names in blank, bestowing salaries and pensions for distribution among the English council. He disguised a common lackey as a herald, and sent him to an interview with the invader. The lackey was as clever and subservient as if he had been bred an ambassador, and won over the luxurious king. Louis flattered his ambition and bribed

his avarice. He called him "king of England and France, and lord of Ireland," contenting himself with the title of "king of the French." He gave him 60,000 crowns on condition of withdrawing his forces at once, and promised him 50,000 crowns a year so long as they both lived. Edward was so captivated by the arts and liberality of Louis that he agreed to visit him at Paris. But Louis repented of the invitation he had given, and put him off, for fear he should grow too fond of that most fascinating of towns. "It is better," he said, "the sea should be between us"; and to attain this object no expense was spared. Gifts were heaped upon the officers, and all the public-houses were made free to the retiring army. The English pocketed the money, and marched from pothouse to pothouse with the greatest satisfaction.

At last it was reported to Louis that his invaders were safe home, and he resolved to make use of his victory. The fate of the constable Saint-Pol was sealed. Conscious of his approaching doom, he threw himself on the protection of his former friend, the duke of Burgundy. Charles hated him for his falsehood, but could not reject a suppliant. He told him to take shelter in St. Quentin. Louis, however, was at his heels with twenty thousand men. He fled, and Charles, rash in promise but infirm of purpose, forgot his chivalry, and surrendered him on the threat of hostilities against himself. He was tried for treason at Paris, and condemned to lose his head on the place de Grève. Thousands of the brave and noble have spilt their blood since that time in the great square which faces the Hôtel-de-Ville, and allows a last view of the towers of Notre Dame; but this is the first occasion in which a prince, a near ally of the throne, — for he had married a sister of the queen, — was exposed to the sword of the headsman for a crime against the crown. The supremacy of the king's will was now so well established that there was no further use for secret assassination. A public execution struck more awe into the populace, and kept the nobility in more subjection, than a stab in the dark or a poisoned peach. Tristan l'Hermite, almost equally with Louis, was from henceforward the acknowledged governor of France. But as long as Charles the Bold preserved his independent attitude in Burgundy, the discontented had always a refuge from the justice of the king.

Last Deeds of Charles the Bold

Fortunately at this time the overweening Burgundian became engaged in controversy with the strong-armed highlanders of Switzerland. They had offended him, by refusing compensation for some injury they had done to one of his adherents. To be resisted by a set of republican shepherds was too much for the knightly pride of the most touchy prince in Christendom. A great army was raised, and poured down upon the town of Granson. The inhabitants were put to the sword or drowned in the Lake of Neuchâtel. All the cantons were irritated at the shameless deed, and rushed to rescue or revenge. Charles met them in a narrow defile at the head of his horsemen, who could not act on such unequal ground. The first rank fell back upon the second, the second carried confusion into the rear. The quick-footed Swiss still pressed on, and at last a complete panic seized the Burgundian host. Charles himself spurred out of the confusion, and galloped as far as his horse could go. Never had the eyes of the mountaineers rested on such wealth and splendour as met them in the tents of the discomfited army — silken curtains, golden vessels, barrels of money, and armour of the finest

[1476–1477 A.D.]

polish. A jewel was taken by a soldier from the private chest of the duke, sold to a priest for a florin, sold by him for five shillings, and is now considered the greatest ornament of the French crown, and one of the richest stones in Europe. Louis did not know how to proceed in these astonishing circumstances. He had signed a treaty to maintain the peace towards the duke, and yet could not resist showing his approbation of the Swiss. With the Swiss also he had signed a treaty, by which he was bound to give them aid in men and money whenever they were attacked. He compromised the two obligations by abstaining from assaulting the Burgundian, and from sending assistance to the Swiss. He could not fulfil both stipulations, and it was more economical to execute neither. He gave the mountaineers, however, unmistakable evidence of his sympathy in their cause ; and when Charles, in the same year, came forth at the head of another powerful army, Louis encouraged the cantons to resist. The same thing as before occurred, with only the variation of place. Morat was a repetition of Granson. The slaughter of the defeated Burgundians was so great that, till the latter end of the eighteenth century, a vast monument was still to be seen upon the field of battle, built up of the bones of the slain, and called the Bone-Hill of Morat.

The battle of Nancy followed in 1477, and raised the Swiss to the summit of military fame, besides weakening Burgundy so as to render it forever powerless against France. In the midst of winter, ill-provided, and doubtful of the issue themselves, the hosts of Burgundy moved on, and laid siege to the town of Nancy. Charles was no longer the impetuous warrior he had been. He was broken in spirit, and at times almost mad with disappointment and chagrin. He had even summoned to command his army an adventurer from Italy, of the name of Campobasso. Campobasso was, as might be expected, a correspondent of Louis, and had offered to place Charles in his hands.

But Louis played, of course, a double game with the deceiver and his dupe. To show how generous he was, he warned the duke of the insincerity of his general, feeling well assured that his advice would be attributed to dishonourable motives ; and accordingly it was thought a weak invention of the enemy, and Campobasso was more trusted than before. Again the Swiss battalions, aided by the forces of René of Lorraine, began to appear. In the midst of a great storm, and in a hard frost, Charles resolved to attack them. Campobasso sent over an offer of his treachery to the gallant mountaineers ; but they despised a traitor, and scorned the disgrace of having such an auxiliary. He therefore retired to the rear of the Burgundian line, to intercept the fugitives, and enrich himself with their ransom. There were few fugitives, however, to ransom ; for, as the horses slipped upon the icy plain, the victory was easier than at either Granson or Morat. The earth was heaped with corpses, and among them, after a long search, was found the body of the fiery duke, fixed in the snow, and so disfigured that he was only recognised by a scar on his face and the length of his nails, which he had allowed to grow, as a sign of mourning, ever since his calamities began. Not deserving of a very favourable epithet, this harsh and arrogant potentate closed a life of violence with a death of defeat.

But now all men's eyes were turned with earnest expectation to the first move in the great drama of intrigue and policy which his demise was certain to produce. His daughter had been the great card which he had held in his hands for many years. Lady of Hainault and Flanders, and all the Low Countries, she was a bait which none of the princes could resist.

MARY OF BURGUNDY

Charles had silenced enemies and gathered friends, by a mere hint of the bestowal of Mary's hand. He had played it against the name of king, and promised it to the son of Frederick the emperor, if that successor of the Roman cæsars would consent to convert his ducal coronet into a royal crown. The treaties and arrangements, and all the preparations for the betrothal and the creation, would be amusing, if they did not show how low morality and honour had fallen in those days. The emperor said, "Let the young people marry, and I will name you king." But the duke, who gave no credit, said, "Make me king, and I will give your son my daughter." Neither would trust the other. The emperor hurried off by stealth from the place of meeting, when he found the duke had summoned an increase to his escort; and Charles, vowing vengeance, and fearful of ridicule, packed up the royal crown he had brought with him beside the sceptre and mantle, and took his way to his states with no higher rank than when he came. Other expectations had been equally disappointed, and now, in the year 1477, Mary was an orphan twenty years of age, handsome and well-informed, with a portion in her own right which would make any man she chose a sovereign prince, or double the grandeur of the greatest potentate. When Louis heard of the father's death, his first thought was, of course, to secure the daughter's succession. He knelt to all his saints in gratitude for the defeat of his rival, walked on a pilgrimage of grace to a church in Anjou, and vowed silver banisters to the tomb of St. Martin of Tours. Having purified his mind by these religious exercises, he sent a peremptory demand for the restoration of the two Burgundies to the crown, as they lapsed for want of male heirs.

Of this there could be no doubt with respect to the duchy, which had been conveyed by John to Philip the Bold; but the county of the same name was capable of feminine holding, and if Mary had been in a condition to assert her claims, might have refused obedience to the king. Mary, however, was lonely in the midst of all that wealth. She had no disinterested guardian to apply to, and made only a feeble protest when the parliament of Burgundy, purchased or intimidated, recognised its feudal obligation, and transferred its allegiance to the French crown. Holland, however, and Flanders, and Artois, and large territories in Germany, and the disputed cities on the Somme, belonged to her still. If she had given her hand to some gallant soldier who would have defended her states, she might have aroused the chivalrous feelings of all the gentlemen in Europe on her behalf. But this she did not try, knowing too well, perhaps, that chivalrous feelings were limited to books of fiction.

The encumbered heiress wrote in her despair to Louis himself. Louis was her godfather, and she had no other friend. She sent four trusty counsellors to lay her case before him. She begged his protection, and made a confidential request that he would conduct all his correspondence with her through no one but these trusted friends. "You want, of course, to know what I intend to do," said Louis, when he had read the letter on the day of audience; and the four envoys bowed. "I will marry my godchild Mary to my son, the dauphin. I will rule her states in their joint names, till she is old enough to do homage. I will take possession of the male fief at once, and if anyone opposes my decisions, I have forces enough to make my will obeyed." There was no circumlocution here, and the ambassadors were silent with surprise. The dauphin was a sickly boy of eight years old, and their young mistress, as we have seen, was in the flower of her age. The



THE ENTRANCE OF LOUIS XI INTO PARIS

[1477–1478 A.D.]

king, in return for the visit of the Burgundian envoys, sent an envoy of his own. His barber was a quick-witted, unprincipled adventurer, of the name of Oliver le Daim. He had come originally from Ghent, and was, of course, master of the Flemish tongue. This was the dignified emissary whom France despatched to the highest princess in Europe. He covered his original baseness with a pinchbeck title, and the barber took his northward way under the name of the count of Meulan. But the count of Meulan smelt dreadfully of the shop. He never could get the shaving-basin out of his countrymen's sight; and at his first reception he behaved so unlike a royal ambassador that he was hissed by the audience, not without allusions to the propriety of throwing him out of the window. He was hustled downstairs, and was glad to slip out of his house and out of the town in the darkness of the night, and make his way back to his employer without having presented his letters of recall.

Louis was delighted, for, while these things were going on at Ghent, he had succeeded with the messengers of poor Mary, and did not care if they had hanged the barber-ambassador on a lamp-post in the street. The trusty counsellors, won over by his address and protestations, surrendered Artois to his honourable keeping; and on their return were executed by the states of Flanders, in spite of the prayers and intercession of the princess. The accusation was not for having betrayed their mistress, but for having constituted themselves members of the council of Four, in whom Mary had told Louis she put all her confidence. She had told nobody else, and declared the innocence of her hapless friends. But Louis, with his usual generosity, had forwarded the letter in which his goddaughter made the fatal avowal, and the discovery was almost fatal to herself. The states were republican in tendency, and resolved to submit as little as possible to the governance of a woman. They tormented her with their advice and wearied her with their reclamations, till she fortunately escaped their further importunities by persuading them to consent to her marriage with Maximilian, the son of the emperor, the man to whom her father had resolved to give her in return for the title of king. Louis was quieted for a time by the fear of offending the emperor, but carried on more fiercely than ever his war against feudalism, as represented by the great nobility at home. Burgundy was gone — Artois was his own — Normandy had long been attached to the crown.

The duke of Brittany, uneasy at the rapid extirpation of his brethren, intrigued with England; but Louis intercepted the letters, convicted him by his own handwriting, and forced him to a treaty which rendered him utterly dependent. The duke had seen that a cloud was gathering from the increased religious fervour visible in the king. When a murder or a treachery was on hand, his activity in visiting shrines and vowing church ornaments became remarkable. People trembled when they saw the meanly dressed, slouch-gaited, sallow-faced old man travelling from altar to altar, and sticking his bonnet full of little images of saints, and pouring out flatteries and adulations to the statues of the Virgin. A tale of blood was sure to follow; and in 1478 the wildest expectations of Paris were surpassed by the horror of one of his executions. There had been no such cold-blooded monster since the days of Tiberius. The duke de Nemours was representative of the great house of Armagnac, and was married to a princess of Anjou, first cousin of the king. A headstrong, discontented, and ambitious man, he had joined in the league of the Public Weal, and in many of the intrigues against the monarch since that time. Louis had taken no notice till he could secure his revenge. But two years before this, he had got him in his power, and kept

the unfortunate man in chains. He was now tried for treason and condemned and executed.[f] In after times it was related that the king had placed the children of the culprit beneath the scaffold, that a father's blood might bathe their innocent heads. But this is only a fable of later invention that marks the reaction against the memory of Louis XI. "What is more certain and equally odious, however," says Michelet,[o] "is that one of the judges who were to receive the goods of the condemned, feeling insecure of the heritage unless he had the natural heir in his power, demanded to be given custody of the eldest son of Nemours. The king had the barbarity to deliver up the child, who promptly disappeared." Moreover, the king suspended from office three counsellors who had not favoured the death penalty.[j]

WAR WITH MAXIMILIAN

Louis' pilgrimages and prayers must have increased in frequency shortly after this, for a tremendous thought had come into his head, and it would require a vast amount of saintly aid to make it tolerable to his subjects. This was no less than the trial for felony and treason of the deceased duke of Burgundy. A court was called, the culprit was summoned, barristers were appointed to support the accusation; his whole life was inquired into, his faults pointed out, and malicious antiquarians ascended to the actions of his ancestors; and the murder of the duke of Orleans, in the reign of Charles VI, was urged as an aggravation of his crimes. After so much eloquence and such convincing proofs, the verdict could not be doubtful. The duke of Burgundy was sure to be found guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, and his estates forfeited to the crown. Maximilian, the husband of Mary, took the alarm. He begged his father the emperor to interfere. He was afraid that action would follow the judgment, and tried at least to delay the sentence. The diet of the states of Germany was about to meet, and might take up the cause of their chiefs. Louis therefore allowed the trial to expire, and had merely the satisfaction of showing that a grand vassal was not safe from his insults and vengeance even after death. Yet the daughter and son-in-law of the insulted potentate could not be expected to remain satisfied under so insolent a proceeding. Maximilian collected his forces, and declared war against the king of France.[f]



A French Knight of the Fifteenth Century

By uniting all his forces, Maximilian had assembled, at St. Omer, an army of about 27,400. On Sunday, the 25th of July, 1479, he reached Arques, waiting there three days, and on the Thursday following, the 29th of July, attacked and invested Thérouanne. The belief in his numerical superiority, the

[1479 A.D.]

desire to retrieve his repulses in Burgundy, and perhaps also the absence of the king, whom he knew to be occupied in Dijon, decided him to take the initiative. Besides, he could only keep his army together for a limited period. This was certainly the moment to try his fortune.

It was really not until Saturday afternoon, the 7th of August, that the principal action took place. Des Querdes, with six hundred picked men, tried to surround the Flemish on his right. The Flemish men-at-arms hastened to defend the spot attacked. Soon the whole of the cavalry was engaged, and the struggle became serious. But the Flemish, separated from their infantry, were forced to give in and began to flee towards Aire, Thérouanne, and St. Omer. The French thought they had won the battle. Encouraged by this success Des Querdes hotly pursued the fugitives, urged on by the hope of capturing rich prizes. "Philip de Raverstein," says the chronicle, "was wearing a mantle of cloth of gold, so that, mistaking him for Duke Maximilian himself, they pursued him to the gates of Aire, but paid dearly for their mistake."

The battle was far from being over, as Des Querdes imagined. Very few men-at-arms remained to support the French infantry, and Maximilian's hope revived. He redoubled his efforts, aided by the Flemish soldiers and German crossbows. The French archers, already seeing that all exertions to break the enemy's lines were fruitless, began to slacken their efforts and their discouragement was obvious. Just then, the lord de St. André arrived with the garrison from Thérouanne. He could still, in this critical moment, hope for victory. But instead of making for the thick of the combat the new arrivals threw themselves upon the enemy's baggage and provisions, counting upon a rich spoil. The lords of Romont and Nassau, seeing the archers busy pillaging, fell upon them. In this tumult they threw them into disorder. Then Maximilian, whilst his cavalry was escaping, himself caused confusion in the ranks of the French by pursuing them with the small number of knights which he could still command, and remained master of the battle-field. But he was thus obliged to raise the siege of Thérouanne, and could only continue the campaign two months later.

Louis XI was much upset when he heard of this defeat. Perhaps he regretted the absence of his experienced and proven chief, who had defended his frontier so well. Comines,[c] who was then returning from his mission in Italy, has preserved for us the portrait of the king: "I thought the king our master grown older and beginning to break up. However, he conducts his affairs with great common sense. I was with him when he received the news of the battle. He was very downcast, for he is not accustomed to defeat; it even seemed as if everything always happened to suit his pleasure. His common sense helped him in this hour of trouble. At first, he feared that his advantages had been lost; but when he knew the truth, he was patient and decided to act so that such things should not be undertaken without his knowledge again."

As soon as Louis XI was aware of how the men-at-arms, thinking only of making many prisoners, had lost a battle all but won, he ordered that all the prisoners and spoil should be collected, sold at auction, and the money equally divided amongst them all. This was returning to the times of Achilles, to the natural equality of the Homeric ages — an equality too often forgotten in barbarous centuries. Forbidding prisoners to be ransomed on the battle-field was already a great step gained; but again, the chiefs, sure under this system of having prisoners at a cheap rate after the battle, thought less of making any during the combat.

But the archduke, in his turn, had to endure some annoyances. The naval campaign had been disastrous for him. Through the care and perseverance of William de Casenove, known as the vice-admiral Coulon, France was in possession of her first real fleet. For several years past, vessels were being unceasingly constructed, their forms perfected, and their size and strength increased. From henceforth, great battles could be waged upon the sea, even against the strongest. Herring fishing had, for a long time, been one of the principal resources of wealth, and a precious means of existence to the northern nations. The French admiral, taking advantage of the fact that the fishermen of Zealand and Holland were bringing into port the fruit of their labours, went to meet them, attacked them boldly, and brought nearly their entire fleet into the Norman ports. In vain did the Dutch equip other vessels to serve as escorts to the fishing boats. Coulon attacked and dispersed them and brought back more prisoners. Thus the archduke and his followers were cut off at one and the same time both from the cereals of Prussia and from the fish they depended upon.[k]

The defeat of Guinegate humbled the hopes of Louis. The war was no longer prosecuted with vigour. Even the death of Mary of Burgundy, which soon after took place, afforded him no opportunity of adding to his usurpations. A treaty, called the Treaty of Arras, was concluded between him and Maximilian, in December, 1482. Its stipulations were that the dauphin Charles should espouse Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter; and that France should acquire, as her dowry, the county of Artois, and that of Burgundy (or Franche-Comté), with other territories; those possessions reverting to Austria in case no heirs came of the marriage. Independently of these cessions, Louis acquired the duchy or province proper of Burgundy, as well as that of Picardy, as his share of the spoils of Charles the Bold. About the same time, on the death of the good king René, he inherited Provence and Anjou. René II of Lorraine made some efforts to establish a claim, but in vain. Good fortune never crowned political craft more completely than in the instance of Louis XI. That monarch had now brought all his favourite schemes to their completion: his nobles were humbled; his great rival was destroyed.[l]

LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF LOUIS

In 1480 Louis XI had a first attack of apoplexy at the château de Montils-les-Tours, called Le Plessis because it had a fortress with many enclosures. Other attacks followed this one and warned him that his end was approaching. He undertook in 1482 the pilgrimage of St. Claude, but the progress of his malady obliged him to retire to Plessis, which he never left. Here he lingered for eighteen months, seen by no one, having in attendance only a small number of officers and servants, and seeking vainly to quiet by religious devotions his customary restlessness. His illness, while subduing his physical forces, only served to increase the activity of his spirit. The more he felt his power waning the more he wished to make others feel it and he became more tyrannical in proportion to his weakness.

Meanwhile he lived in this seclusion in perpetual suspicion of everyone — not only the princes of the family, but even of the most obscure members of the household, though they had been chosen most carefully. His castle was a prison, well guarded, where he was bound, following the expression of Comines, by strange chains and enclosures, in fear of conspirators. Jealous of his power up to the last hour, "he had himself arrayed in rich vestments, such as had never been the custom before." His isolation was such that he

[1483 A.D.]

rarely saw even the dauphin, who was brought up far from him, in the château d'Amboise. Little by little his state of weakness effaced the king and left only the man. During this period he returned to himself, and perhaps to new thoughts; for he wished the relief of his people and a peace of six months at least. This was, also, the time of his terrors and superstitions, which have been so much exaggerated, for he retained his clearness of mind and gave proof of it even in the last days of his life. At times the king awoke in him, and made those around him feel that he was master; and he was more jealous than ever of his authority, suffering no one under any circumstances to question it.

He overwhelmed the church with donations in order to obtain acquittal of his offences, just as the ancient Merovingian kings thought to expiate their crimes on their death-beds at a similar price. He surrounded himself with priests whose prayers he desired; he brought from Calabria the famous Francis of Paula (Paola), founder of the order of Minims, for which order he had built a monastery at Plessis. His doctor, Jacques Cottier, took a scandalous part in these liberal actions. He seemed to ask of heaven not so much the salvation of the soul as the prolongation of life. Many hold that this long agony, these physical and moral sufferings, were an expiation. Comines sees in it "a punishment which God had sent upon him in this world that he might suffer less in the next, and that those who succeeded him might have more pity on the people and punish them less than he had." He died the 30th of August, 1483, in his sixty-first year.

The opinions expressed by contemporaries on this king, whose character was so remarkable and strange, were various, but of uniform severity. Comines, whose opinion might be subject to question, as he was his minister, his confidant, and almost his accomplice, has praised but little his prodigious activity, his genius for intriguing, and his singular aptitude for the carrying on of dark schemes in all directions. John de Troyes, although recognising that the power of the country had been strengthened, the kingdom brought more into unity, and new provinces acquired, blames most strongly the means employed, the dilapidation of the finances, the ruin of the people, the excess of arbitrariness, and the injury to the morals of the public. If public opinion was mute during this reign, it does not follow that it was favourable to the king. Of course the evidence that has been preserved is too slight to be able to make a positive assertion, but the theatre and popular verse of the period show the fault-finding spirit that existed.

In truth, Louis XI left the kingdom overwhelmed with burdens, the people unhappy, the prisons full, and discontent everywhere. He is reproached with always having had a large army and never having carried on a brilliant war; with not having respected the liberty of the church; with having ceaselessly violated justice; with having preferably employed corrupt agents who were justly detested; with having acted without definite plans; with being humble in misfortune and insolent in success, commencing enterprises which were never finished. He, however, knew so well how to be master; to bring the will of others into subjection to his own; to inspire in the world, and especially in those who approached him, the sentiments of obedience, fear, and almost admiration for his political genius; in fact, he had so well filled the position of king and of prince that, even after his death and when a strong reaction had set in against his reign, a certain terror continued to be attached to his name. It would seem that no one dared oppose him; Comines himself, who has drawn his portrait with such a master hand, has in this respect a singular discretion.[e]

Guizot, after quoting Comines[c] and Duclos,[m] adds: "I am more exacting than Comines and Duclos; I cannot consent to apply to Louis XI the words "liberal," "virtuous," "good"; he had neither greatness of soul, uprightness of character, nor kindness of heart; he was neither a great king nor a good king; but I hold to the last word of Duclos, 'He was a king.'"[i]

"He was a king." That verdict, at least, no one will dispute; and for a concluding estimate of the character of his kingship, we perhaps cannot do better than to quote the judicious words of Martin:

MARTIN'S ESTIMATE OF LOUIS XI

Utility was Louis' sole rule; he never comprehended what power there is in justice. In everything he preferred, sometimes to his own disadvantage, the crooked line to the straight line, stratagem to force, suavity to courage, although when necessary he had the stubborn courage of an indomitable will. He was the incarnate reaction against the Middle Ages, against its morals and its ideality as well as its errors, against its liberties as well as its anarchy. The very devoutness of Louis, the only inconsistency in a character which would otherwise have been incredible, had no more of the grand, austere fanaticism of earlier days; it was a materialistic fetichism that went back beyond the Middle Ages to the time when the barbarian kings gave the saints of heaven half the credit for their enterprises and their aims. Except for this weakness Louis XI was the most illustrious disciple of that policy of which the contemporary Italian despots gave the example and the theory of which Macchiavelli was later to set forth and give his name to. The usurper of the duchy of Milan, the famous Francesco Sforza, had been Louis XI's master and model. Italian education invaded France earlier in politics than in fine arts.

There was one essential distinction between Louis and his masters. He was like them in his means, but different in his end. These tyrants on the other side of the Alps had only a personal, or at best a family end, while Louis pursued a common end. He was the head of a real political society, the head of a nation. On this point, and on this alone, he had a conscience. He had a strong instinct for the future and wished to leave behind a work that would endure after him. This bad man was not a bad Frenchman.

His reign, so troublous, so oppressive, so unhappy for the people, had accomplished wonderful things for the unity of the French nation. It gave to France, Picardy from the sources of the Oise to Burgundy, Provence, Anjou, Maine, Barrois, and Roussillon; and at least a provisional title to Artois and Franche-Comté. It upheld the power of France to the Pyrenees on the west, to the Jura on the east, and to the maritime Alps, and it powerfully advanced the important work of establishing natural frontiers. It had subordinated the power of great and petty lords alike and had placed under the control of the crown a great military force. It had favoured the development of the middle classes and of the industrial and commercial forces of the country. But if the growth of national power under him was immense, if social progress was in certain respects incontestable, it is equally certain that despotism made a like progress. The instruments of autocracy were fortified and perfected by him, and under him the religion of force and of strategy, "the religion of success" as Michelet terms it, everywhere dethroned the religion of duty and of right; nor is it possible to stifle morality everywhere in the political world without profoundly altering the ethics of private life.

The aurora of a brilliant intellectual dawn was now appearing above the horizon; active minds turn eagerly towards the new light; but France was not in a healthy moral condition to receive the new lessons of the Renaissance.[ai]

LOUIS' INFLUENCE ON CIVILISATION

It must not be overlooked, however, that Louis had a powerful influence upon his time in other directions than that of mere statecraft. His mind was ever receptive to any novelty that did not contradict his authority. He favoured literature and science; in particular the healing art made progress under the valetudinarian king. In surgery there was at least one great conquest; the operation of lithotomy was performed for the first time under the authorisation of the king, upon a condemned criminal, who recovered and was granted his life. Louis also came to some extent under the influence of the learned Greeks, who after the overthrow of Constantinople, in 1453, scattered over western Europe. Several of these were received at the French court. The king took a certain interest also in the famous discussion between the nominalists and the realists which so long distracted the philosophical world. Acting, it is supposed, under the advice of his confessor, Louis in 1474 took the part of the nominalists and prohibited the works of Ockam, Buridan, and other realists; though three years later the prohibition was removed. Louis showed himself equally receptive in regard to the new art of printing. As early as 1469 three exponents of the wonderful new method of book-making appeared in Paris in answer to the summons of William Fichet, rector of the university, and began their work with the royal sanction. Before the close of Louis' reign many books had been printed in Paris as well as in several of the other large cities of France. The chronicles of St. Denis were published in 1476, together with numerous other religious and classical works. A translation of the Bible appeared in 1477. From this time books multiplied so rapidly that the contemporary poets assure us with hyperbolic enthusiasm that more books are produced from day to day than formerly could be written in an entire year.[aj]

The catholicity of interest which enabled Louis thus in the midst of his political activities to become to so considerable an extent a patron of the sciences and arts, furnishes conclusive evidence of the fulness of his mental equipment. It remains to call attention to an even more important contribution made by Louis to the amenities of civilisation. This was in the matter of the establishment of government posts. Here he was an innovator not merely for France but for the modern world; and there have been those enthusiasts who would claim for this feat a place among the three greatest achievements of the fifteenth century — the other two being the invention of printing and the discovery of America. Whatever may be thought of this estimate, there is no question that the creation of the postal service was a most important innovation, and it seems equally little in question that Louis XI was the innovator.[ak]

Establishment of Posts in France

Certain ancient writers have attributed Louis' motives in creating the posts to his paternal solicitude. They say "Louis XI, being anxious about the illness of the dauphin, from whom he was separated, established the posts in order to be informed at almost every moment of the hope or fear which his condition inspired." This is most improbable, given Louis XI's charac-

ter, but it can readily be admitted that his spirit of dissimulation might easily have prompted him to invent and circulate a fable of this kind, in order to distract attention from the end which he really had in view. His restless life, his disputes with his greater vassals, particularly with the duke of Burgundy, his continual intrigues with the principal courts of Europe, at which he had secret agents, suffice to explain the interest he had in establishing posts, by means of which he could satisfy at once his suspicious mind and his ambitious schemes. In character Louis XI's institution resembles the ancient posts, especially the Roman (*cursus publicus*). Louis' only object was to facilitate the exercise of his royal power and to strengthen his authority at the time when the league of the Public Weal was about to be founded with the object of dismembering his kingdom. Therefore it was greatly to his interest to be rapidly informed of all the unforeseen events which might arise. Is it necessary to add that it never entered into the thoughts of Louis XI to institute a public service in his kingdom by which private individuals might profit in any way?

The exact date when the posts began to be placed along the high-roads is not known. According to Nicholas de la Mare even the name of the first postmaster-general is not given: but, says he, as Louis XI's intention was to confide this office to a person of credit, intelligent and capable, it was probably given to the grand equerry of France, whose functions had much more in common with the new charge; the grand equerry had, it is true, the king's messengers already under his orders. The same author says, in another passage, that the king's messengers became so numerous that it was found necessary to create a controller of king's messengers (edict of October, 1479). In the absence of proofs to the contrary, we believe that it was Robert Paon who, in October, 1479, received the double charge of postmaster-general of foot runners and of controller of king's messengers, and was thus invested with supreme authority over the growing institution.

The runners or king's messengers were, properly speaking, cabinet messengers, by which denomination they were afterwards known. They followed the court and had to be always in readiness to carry the king's despatches. They already existed previous to the decree of 1464, and it is to be supposed that the towns or villages that they passed on their route were bound to provide them with relays of horses. This we understand from the statute of St. Louis, of December 13th, 1254, which we have already quoted, and from a statute of Philip V, surnamed the Tall, of February 11th, 1318, which gives the royal couriers the qualification of king's messengers (*chevaucheurs*). The edict of 1464 officially sanctioned the existence of the couriers or messengers and made them into a regular and definite body. Their number, fixed at first at 230, had at the death of Louis XI risen to 234. But it is very probable that this number comprised the officers who kept horses for the service of the king, or *maîtres coureurs*, that is to say king's messengers who went by the name of *chevaucheurs*.

The *maîtres coureurs* were established at distances of four leagues along the high-roads, keeping four or five horses of light build and suited to go at a gallop; they received, besides their wages, a fee for each horse which they supplied to people holding a passport from the king with the seal of the postmaster general. They were also, as we have said, qualified as king's messengers, because they were not only charged with keeping horses, but also with carrying letters and parcels of the king, the governors, the lord-lieutenants of the provinces, and other superior officers. It is not probable, however, that the *maîtres coureurs* actually carried the king's despatches

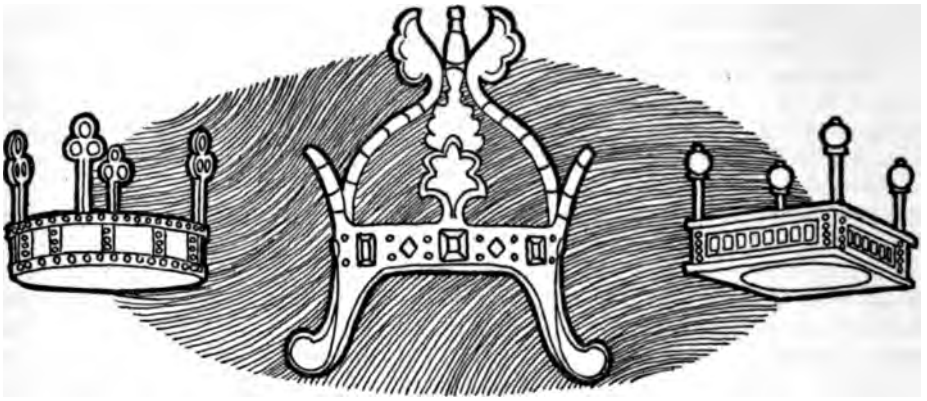
from post to post, as it is certain that the court despatches were conveyed by special messengers or *coureurs de cabinet.*

Later on the king's messengers lost the title of *chevaucheurs*, which placed them in a relatively inferior position to the *coureurs de cabinet*, but what they lost in dignity they gained in profits. At first the new institution profited only the king, his commissioners in the provinces, or personages accredited to foreign courts. Even the terms of the edict, which defined the attributes of the postmaster-general, have from the outset given a political character to this high post.

The postal organisation created by Louis XI comprised two distinct postal systems — a system of relays, embracing the most important towns and served by the king's messengers on horseback; a secondary postal system, branching off at certain points from the former and including secondary localities. The latter system was covered by messengers "sworn and received in the court of parliament."

This organisation is justly considered as having been the starting point of the modern post, but the state did not as yet look upon itself as being the servant of the public. Private letters continued to be transported almost exclusively by university messengers. But these, even in the time of Louis XI, were in competition with the royal messengers already in existence at that time, as is testified by the numerous inquiries and proceedings relating to disputes of this nature mentioned in the voluminous collection of manuscripts known as the *de Toisy*, which is in the Bibliothèque Nationale. These disputes were prolonged in the sequel with a vivacity which increased as the interests engaged became more considerable by reason of the incessant progress of circulation and correspondence.[n]





CHAPTER XI

CHARLES VIII AND LOUIS XII — THE INVASION OF ITALY

[1483–1515 A.D.]

There never was a period of history in which the efforts of individual minds were more important in their effects than the present. The inventions of one or two artisans on the banks of the Rhine presented mankind with the art of printing; an idea, a theory, springing up in the manly mind of Columbus, led to the discovery of another hemisphere; a whim conceived by Charles VIII, who, from hearing tales of Cæsar and Charlemagne, suddenly became desirous of turning conqueror, had more effect on the destinies of Europe than all those occult causes of human progress which the philosopher of history loves to fathom. — CROWE.[c]

CHARLES VIII (1483–1497 A.D.)

WE now enter the epoch when, according to the usual computations of modern writers, the Middle Ages are passing away and modern times are being ushered in. Just at the time when Charles VIII is preparing to establish a new order of things in Europe by invading Italy, Columbus is sailing out into the western seas to discover the New World. This is the age when the new forces of the Renaissance are making themselves felt in Italy, and, to a less extent, all over Christendom. It is the age of Lorenzo de' Medici in Florence, and of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo; of Alexander VI, the Borgia, and of Savonarola; of Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain; and of Edward V and Henry VII in England. It is an age of new ideas, an age of discovery. The seat of the new culture is Italy; the centres from which the explorers start out in quest of new worlds are Spain and Portugal. France has little share in either of these movements; but she shares with the other peoples a spirit of unrest; and this spirit is to manifest itself in the attempt of Charles VIII — Charles the Little as Brantôme[b] calls him — and his immediate successors to make the conquest of Italy. A fatal ambition that! It will cost France the lives of two millions of her best men; it will gain her little else than bitter experiences. But the vain ambition of a selfish prince never yet learned to count the cost; and in this case it must be admitted that the dominant spirit of the people is in full accord with the reckless ambition of the kings.

[1483 A.D.]

This idea of extending the domain of France was the one thought that dominated the life of Charles VIII, after he came to maturity. Yet the first years of his reign were devoted to a very different purpose. During these earlier years, as we shall see, the weakly youth was under the control of his sister Anne de Beaujeu, who had inherited many of the traits of Louis XI, and who carried forward the policy of that crafty monarch to its logical conclusion when she succeeded in bringing the last of the great feudal fiefs under full control of the crown, through the marriage of her brother Charles with Anne of Brittany. Thus the earlier years of Charles VIII must be regarded, thanks to the influence of his sister, as continuing and perfecting that policy of the unification of France which Louis XI had carried forward so efficiently. The events of the reign, therefore, divide themselves into two sharply defined periods. The first of these, during which Charles though nominally king is really subordinate to the influence of his sister, will now claim our attention.[a]

The Rule of Anne de Beaujeu

Charles VIII, born June 30th, 1470, had entered his fourteenth year when his father died, and he was consequently of age by the terms of the famous ordinance of Charles V: it was therefore not necessary to establish a regency. But the government of the realm and the direction of council had been given to the first occupant, as the struggle which was to begin between the ambitions of the rivals could not be foreseen. The king, feeble of body, gave no hint of precocious talents; his minority in fact if not in law seemed as if it should be prolonged beyond the usual term.

The true danger to the state lay less in public unrest, so easily appeased by the reforms partially foreseen and indicated by Louis XI himself, than in the pretensions of the princes of the blood to take again their baleful power which had been crushed under Louis XI. The late king, in dying, had confided his son and his authority to his daughter Anne and his son-in-law Peter de Bourbon, sire de Beaujeu. His widow, Charlotte of Savoy, trembling still at the memory of her tyrannical spouse, made no objection to this exclusion. She survived Louis only a few months. Anne of France had laboured in advance to gain the confidence of the young king, whom she inspired with a timid deference, and had attached to herself the greater part of the councillors as well as the leaders and servitors of Louis XI. Anne, who was then twenty-two years old, was the only one of the children of Louis XI who resembled him. She had the tenacity, the dissimulation, and the iron will of the late king, who had once said of her with his usual caustic manner that she was "the least foolish of women, since there were no wise women." She proved that there was at least one, since she continued with admirable sagacity and energy all that was national in the plans of Louis XI. "She would have been worthy of the throne by her prudence and courage, if nature had not denied to her the sex upon which empire devolves." This opinion of a contemporary is also that of posterity. Anne's husband, a man of ripe age, of upright judgment, and a certain practical capacity, was but the first and most useful instrument of his wife. Through him she hoped to conciliate the other princes of the house of Bourbon, the duke de Bourbon and the archbishop of Lyons, brothers of the sire de Beaujeu; the old count de Montpensier, their uncle; the count de Vendôme and his son, their cousins; and the admiral de Bourbon, their bastard brother. The natural rival of Anne and her husband was the other son-in-law of Louis XI, the

first prince of the blood, the duke Louis of Orleans, whose birth gave him the place of honour in the council. The name of Orleans awakened sad memories. But Duke Louis was hardly twenty-one years of age; repressed during the whole of his first years under the iron hand of his terrible father-in-law, bound from his infancy to a woman worthy of esteem for her gentleness and kindness, but whose exterior repulsed every other sentiment, it was not ambition to which he devoted the first days of his liberty. He emancipated himself more like a schoolboy than a prince, and broke rein only to throw himself body and soul into a whirl of pleasure. Women, gambling, tournaments, horses, the pleasures of the table, left him little inclination for the cares of politics. He preferred courting women, breaking lances, jumping ditches "fifteen feet wide," to discussing royal edicts. Meanwhile he shared with the Bourbons the semblance of power, and his cousin, Dunois, son and heritor of the great count de Dunois, a most able man, and accustomed to diplomatic intrigues, spared nothing to draw him in the direction of duty. All who remained of the members and allies of the royal house had hastened to sit in council, and the first letters and edicts of Charles VIII are signed by several among them.

Some acts of indispensable reparation and amends signalised the beginning of the new régime. All who had suffered, all who had been offended, oppressed, justly or unjustly, under the late king—that is to say, nearly everyone in the kingdom—urgently demanded justice. The people clamoured loudly for the abolition of duties, and the punishment of the "wicked councillors" of Louis XI. A host of great noblemen, the count du Perche, the children of the duke de Nemours, the count de Bresse, the brother of the last count d'Armagnac, the prince of Orange, and very many others asked, some of them liberty, others restitution of property which had been confiscated. The duke, René de Lorraine, came in his turn to reclaim the duchy of Bar, and the county of Provence as the heritage of his mother. Claims threatened to go very far.

From the 22nd of September, all alienations of the royal domain, made for the benefit of either the church or private individuals, were revoked. The necessity for that measure could not be contested. The count du Perche was liberated from the cruel prison where he languished, and recovered the duchy of Alençon, confiscated but lately in spite of the just title of his father. The duke John de Bourbon, who had endured many affronts and vexations from Louis XI during the last years, was created lieutenant-general of the realm, and invested with the office of constable, vacant since the death of the count of Saint-Pol. This was the most powerful of the princes of the blood, by reason of the extent of his domains, but his infirmities and love of repose made him hardly equal to active participation in the government; his sister-in-law asked of him only the support of his name. The count de Dunois acquired a large pension with the governorship of Dauphiné, while the duke of Orleans became lieutenant-general of the Île-de-France, Picardy, and Champagne. The prince of Orange and the count de Bresse were again put in possession of their lands. This was only justice—at least to the prince of Orange, since the Treaty of Arras had stipulated reciprocal amnesty for all events relating to the war of the Burgundian Succession. The duke René of Lorraine, thanks to the support of the duke de Bourbon and Madame de Beaujeu, who expected to make use of the hero of Nancy against the princes of Orleans, obtained the restitution of Barrois, without re-embursement of the sums for which the king held Bar in pledge, a company of one hundred lancers, and 3,600 francs annually for four years, "during which time the

[1483–1484 A.D.]

claims of the count of Provence should be investigated." Madame Anne did not intend to go further than the concession of Barrois and wished only to gain time in regard to Provence. According to feudal law, the pretensions of René were justified: female succession was so thoroughly admitted in Provence that two women had successively brought this county into the two houses of Anjou; but another law, more conformable to reason and the nature of things, tending to be substituted in place of feudal law, was that of French nationality recognised and accepted by Provence.

These favours accorded to the princes were accompanied by harsh measures against the most odious of the ministers of the former reign. Oliver le Dain, count de Meulan, was sacrificed to popular vindictiveness, and Doyat to the resentment of the duke de Bourbon, whose follower he had been, and whom he had gravely offended. Oliver was condemned to death for various crimes, among others for having secretly killed a prisoner whose wife had sacrificed her honour to him as the price of her husband's life; the barber count de Meulan was hanged on the gibbet of Montfaucon, and his properties were given to the duke of Orleans. Doyat was beaten with rods at the pillory of the market-place, and lost both his ears, after having had his tongue pierced by a hot iron — punishment reserved for blasphemers and calumniators. One of his ears was cut off at Paris, the other at Montferrand, where he had filled the office of royal bailiff. The physician Coitier was relieved from the loss of his lands and castles by a ransom of 50,000 crowns.

Public sentiment demanded more than the punishment of a few wretches. The princes, divided among themselves, little known to the people, who had for them hardly any affection or fear, felt the impossibility of maintaining the despotic rule of Louis XI, and the necessity of having recourse to a national authority to obtain the obedience of the masses. The people would not have failed to resist universally the continuation of arbitrary taxation. This law reacted with irresistible force against the existing tyranny: a thousand voices repeated that "no king nor lord had the power to levy one denier on his subjects and on the revenues of his domain without the concession and consent of the people." Comines, the admirer of Louis XI, devotes a whole chapter to the discussion of this principle, which he declares not only equitable but essential to the prosperity of states, and regrets profoundly that the late king had not respected it. "In England," said he, "the kings can undertake no great enterprise, nor levy any subsidies without assembling parliament, which equals the three estates, and which is a just and holy thing." And he declares that "men who enjoy credit and authority without in the least meriting them" are the only ones who fear the great assemblies, since they will through them be known for the little they are worth. The king's council, on the proposition of the duke of Orleans, decided the convocation of the states-general at Tours, for the 5th of January, 1484, in spite of the outcries of some persons "of small importance, and little virtue, who said it was a crime of *lèse majesté* to talk of assembling the estates, and would tend to diminish the authority of the king." The friends of "Madame" as Anne of France was called, and those of the duke of Orleans, were agreed upon that important question. Each of the two parties which began to outline itself in the council hoped for the assistance of the estates against the other.

The record of state of 1484, drawn up by one of the most trustworthy members of the order of the clergy, Jean Masselin, official of the archbishopric of Rouen, has been preserved to us. It is the most explicit account we possess of the national assemblies of France, before the sixteenth century.

It is of great interest, and it preserves for us the memory of most important incidents. Nevertheless the states of 1484 became less remarkable for their actions than for their mode of action, that is, innovations practised in the system of election. Louis XI, in 1468, had already overturned the old form of the estates, but without substituting definitely a new form in the place of the old. The daughter of Louis XI, and the members of the council who nursed the project of the late king in the midst of a feudal reaction, effaced from the elections all trace of feudality, completing and regulating the work of Louis. Before Louis XI, the estates were composed only of the immediate feudatories of the king — prelates, barons, representatives of the *bonnes villes*, and the ecclesiastical or lay committees held by the crown.

In the estates of 1484 the elections were made after a uniform regulation, by bailiwicks and *sénéchaussées*, by purely administrative divisions; the electors were convoked not as feudatories of the king, but as subjects of the realm; and for the first time the peasants, at least the free peasants, were called upon to take part in operations of first degree; they sent delegates from the villages to the lesser bailiwicks or provostships, where the electors of the third degree were chosen, who in the headquarters of the bailiwick elected the deputies of the third estate. The social importance of such a change needs no commentary. There is now a real third estate, embracing the whole body of the people. The peasant is no longer the chattel of the lord of the manor, the appendix of the fief; he is the equal of the citizen, he is a member of the third estate.

This is not all; the same spirit of unity and equality, at least relative, is manifested in the regulation applied to the two privileged orders. There, all vote directly and not by triple degree; and not only do the lower clergy elect representatives, but the bishops are admitted to the estates only when they have the votes of the ecclesiastical order, and not by virtue of their episcopal title. In the nobility as well, no great baron is member of the estates unless elected by the noblemen. The three orders, under this régime, appear like three superimposed nations, in which equality reigns. It is here the great difference appears between the democratic spirit of France and the aristocratic spirit of England.

The only exceptions to the new rules were those provinces which were administered by annual provincial estates, and which continued to choose their deputies in their provincial estates, without resorting to popular assemblies of three degrees. This is true at least of Languedoc, and resulted, as a rule, in a veritable political inferiority of those countries formerly so much in advance of the others, their provincial estates retaining an oligarchical character in presence of a transformation wholly democratic.*g*

The king's minority and the factions at court seemed no unfavourable omens for liberty. But a scheme was artfully contrived which had the most direct tendency to break the force of a popular assembly. The deputies were classed in six nations, who debated in separate chambers, and consulted each other only upon the result of their respective deliberations. It was easy for the court to foment the jealousies natural to such a partition. Two nations, the Norman and the Burgundian, asserted that the right of providing for the regency devolved, in the king's minority, upon the states-general; a claim of great boldness, and certainly not much founded upon precedent. In virtue of this, they proposed to form a council, not only of the princes, but of certain deputies to be elected by the six nations who composed the states. But the other four, those of Paris, Aquitaine, Languedoc, and Languedoïl (which last comprised the central provinces), rejected this plan,

[1484 A.D.]

from which the two former ultimately desisted, and the choice of councillors was left to the princes.

A firmer and more unanimous spirit was displayed upon the subject of public reformation. The tyranny of Louis XI had been so unbounded that all ranks agreed in calling for redress, and the new governors were desirous at least, by punishing his favourites, to show their inclination towards a change of system. They were very far, however, from approving the propositions of the states-general. These went to points which no court can bear to feel touched, though there is seldom any other mode of redressing public abuses — the profuse expense of the royal household, the number of pensions and improvident grants, the excessive establishment of troops. The states explicitly demanded that the taille and all other arbitrary imposts should be abolished ; and that from thenceforward, "according to the natural liberty of France," no tax should be levied in the kingdom without the consent of the states. It was with great difficulty, and through the skilful management of the court, that they consented to the collection of the taxes payable in the time of Charles VII, with the addition of one-fourth, as a gift to the king upon his accession. This subsidy they declare to be granted "by way of gift and concession, and not otherwise, and so as no one should from thenceforward call it a tax, but a gift and concession." And this was only to be in force for two years, after which they stipulated that another meeting should be convoked. But it was little likely that the government would encounter such a risk; and the princes, whose factious views the states had by no means seconded, felt no temptation to urge again their convocation. No assembly in the annals of France seems, notwithstanding some party selfishness arising out of the division into nations, to have conducted itself with so much public spirit and moderation; nor had that country perhaps ever so fair a prospect of establishing a legitimate constitution.*j*

The most serious question which the estates had to determine was that of regulating the composition of the council and deciding to whom the care and education of the king should be confided. The deputies would have liked to conciliate the princes without clashing with them. However, in the course of examining the various projects submitted to them, they were led to inquire if the states-general were invested with the constituent power. The opinion that this was so was shared by the most eminent members of the assembly, especially by those belonging to the order of the clergy, and had for interpreter an eloquent deputy of the Burgundian nobility, the sire de la Roche. He demonstrated that no absolute, fundamental rule for the administration of the kingdom during the minority or childhood of the king existed in France; that neither was the right of the princes in such circumstances in any way definite or precise. In consequence he maintained that it was for the nation, that is for the estates, to constitute the government in moments of crisis. He presented a theoretical and philosophic analysis of the principle of the sovereignty such as might be laid down in the schools; then he passed in review the history of preceding assemblies and showed that several of them, called together under exceptional circumstances, had exercised a genuine constituent power.

In spite of the weight of this justly celebrated speech, the estates shrank from the danger of entering into a struggle with the council and the princes. They preferred to attempt an amiable conciliation of the different claims. It was not easy to come to an understanding even on this basis; for each day brought new difficulties. "It was," says Masselin, "the seven-headed

hydra. Cut one and two grow in its place." Finally it was agreed that the duke of Orleans should have the first place at the council and the presidency in the young king's absence; the duke de Bourbon and the sire de Beaujeu the second and third places; that the other princes of the blood should have the right to take their seats there after them; that all the existing councillors should be retained and that twelve new councillors, taken from the six bureaux of the estates, should be added to them.[k]

The Struggle with the Duke of Orleans

The discontent of the duke of Orleans was not appeased by the decision of the states. He was a handsome, frank, amiable man, not naturally inclined to be turbulent; but as first prince of the blood, and heir presumptive to the throne, it was derogatory to his pride and spirit to remain tranquil, while deprived of all influence by a woman. Dunois, son of the famous bastard of Orleans, was his chief friend and councillor — a man as fond of intrigue, apparently, as his stout sire had been of battle. The dukes of Lorraine and Bourbon seemed at first inclined to join him, but both were won over by the lady Anne; Bourbon, the elder brother of the lord of Beaujeu, being made constable. Orleans tried every expedient to shake the authority of the king's sister. He sought to make himself popular in the capital, and to bring its citizens to declare in his favour. He tried the parliament also; but its president, La Vaquerie, replied that it was not their interest or duty to interfere in a private struggle for power. Orleans was soon after closely pressed by La Trémouille at the head of a superior army, and obliged to make submission; Dunois being banished to Asti, a town in Italy which the duke of Orleans inherited from his grandmother, Valentine of Milan.

Such a forced submission could not conduce to a lasting peace. Dunois soon afterwards returned from exile. There was a plot for carrying off the king, which failed, and the duke of Orleans was obliged to take refuge in Brittany. The gay and fascinating manners of the French prince entirely won the good will of Francis, the reigning duke. He was without male heirs; and his daughter, as inheritor of the duchy, was a rich prize for an ambitious prince. It is said that the duke of Orleans became a suitor for the hand of Anne, and that Duke Francis favoured his pretensions.[1] But the native nobles of the province were jealous of the duke of Orleans and of his influence with their prince. They leagued with the lady of Beaujeu against both; and a French army, supported by a great body of Bretons, soon after besieged the dukes of Brittany and Orleans in Nantes. There were two other pretenders to the hand of the heiress of Brittany: the sire d'Albret, a rich lord of Gascony, into whose family the crown of Navarre had passed from that of Fox. The duke of Orleans, in prosecuting his own suit, affected to support this competitor. The other was Maximilian, king of the Romans. A timely succour sent by this prince obliged the French to raise the siege of Nantes; and the lady of Beaujeu betraying a disposition to conquer the duchy, and to garrison and appropriate its towns, the Bretons became suspicious, abandoned her, and resumed their allegiance to the duke. The war nevertheless continued. The troops on both sides met at St. Aubin, and a battle ensued. The French were commanded by La Trémouille; the prince of Orange and duke of Orleans led on the Bretons. The French

[1 The exact attitude of the duke of Orleans, at this early period, toward his future wife is not clearly established. Further reference to the subject is made later in the present chapter.]

[1488–1491 A.D.]

gendarmerie, having routed the cavalry opposed to them, took the Bretons in flank and rear, and routed them. The duke of Orleans and the prince of Orange were both taken prisoners. They were startled to perceive a confessor enter their tent in the evening. La Trémouille, who saw and enjoyed their consternation, reassured them by observing that it was only for the inferior rebels to clear their consciences and prepare for death.

An accommodation followed this defeat. The duke of Brittany made submissions, and survived but a short time. He was the last duke of the province, which now descended to his daughter Anne. There was another sister, who, as she died soon after, need not be more than mentioned. Affairs were now as unsettled as ever. The count d'Albret, seconded by a strong party of Bretons, who above all things aimed at the independence of their duchy, pushed his suit with the young heiress. The addresses of this aged noble could not be agreeable to a princess of fourteen. The duke of Orleans, the object of her predilection, was in prison. The armies of France were invading the duchy, and it behoved her to espouse a prince capable of defending her dominions. The resolution was taken that she should be married to Maximilian, king of the Romans, and the ceremony was accordingly performed by proxy; the archduke's ambassador, to conclude it, putting a naked leg into the couch of the young duchess. Hitherto the aim of king Charles and his regent sister had been to conquer the duchy by force of arms, laying claim to it as a male fief. Charles had been long betrothed to Margaret of Austria, Maximilian's daughter, who was then receiving her education in the French court, and awaiting the age of nubility. The stubbornness of the Bretons, however, made the lady of Beaujeu despair of her project. The ever-ready Dunois, in order to make his own peace and procure the liberty of the duke of Orleans, proposed that Charles should espouse the young duchess himself, and thus unite Brittany to the kingdom. Charles and his sister instantly entered into this scheme. The king, with a kingly generosity, began by setting the duke of Orleans, his secret rival, at liberty. This the monarch did without consulting his sister; nor was his generosity abused, for the duke remained ever after faithful to him, and even seconded his purpose of espousing Anne. Dunois, on his side, laboured to render the duchess less hostile to France. Anne still held with all the faithfulness of a wife to Maximilian, to whom she was nominally betrothed. An ostensible act of compulsion was deemed requisite to overcome her reluctance. A royal army besieged her in Rennes. One of the conditions of the capitulation was that she should espouse the king of France.[c]



CHARLES VIII
(From an old French engraving)

The marriage festivities which united Brittany to France took place at Langeais-Touraine. The pope declared the former marriage of Anne and Maximilian null and void, and the new queen was conducted to Paris to be

crowned. All these negotiations took place in the greatest secrecy, as it was desired to conceal them from the envoy of Maximilian. The king of the Romans was doubly insulted. Charles VIII took from him a princess whom he had already married by proxy, and sent back to him his daughter Margaret, educated in Paris, since the Treaty of Arras, and destined to the throne of France. When the time came to declare the marriage, it was shown that Maximilian had been the first to violate the Treaty of Arras, that he had never ceased to make war against France for fourteen years, and that he had not respected the conventions of Frankfort or Plessis-les-Tours.

The contract was made with much artfulness. Charles VIII and Anne gave up all their rights, their reciprocal pretensions which it was useless to pronounce upon. It was stipulated that these rights should be combined in the persons of the children born of this marriage; that if there were none, and the king should die, the duchess could not contract a second marriage except with his successor or the heir presumptive to the crown, on pain of losing the duchy.

The province demanded the maintenance of its privileges, which were confirmed (declaration of July 7th, 1492). It preserved its particular estates, its supreme court of justice, which sixty years later became the parliament of Rennes, and its independent administration. It was assimilated in every respect with Dauphiné, Languedoc, Provence, and Burgundy, but it ceased to be a sovereign state, to become like those countries one of the members of the body of the monarchy. It is annoying that we cannot to-day follow, step by step, the artful conduct of the duchess of Bourbon. However that may be, she had at that time achieved her ends, and scored a complete triumph. Brittany was joined permanently to France; the princes were reconciled, in a definite manner this time. Finally Charles VIII arrived at man's estate, and having nothing to fear of internal conspiracies, could defy those of foreign countries.

Meanwhile the coalition, which had shown too little activity to hinder the reunion with Brittany, was too strongly opposed to it to accept it without protest. A war might be expected, or at least great diplomatic difficulties. Henry VII, Maximilian, and Ferdinand the Catholic protested in common against an act which the latter called an unheard-of and execrable fraud. They agreed to attack France on her different frontiers. But the king of England was in a measure the only one to act. Ferdinand, for the last twelve years, was directing all his forces against Granada, and in spite of the triumph of his officers, who raised the Christian flag there in February, 1492, he could undertake nothing against France, unless it was to continue the hostilities on the frontier of Roussillon, which had never been interrupted. Maximilian, obliged to submit to Hungary, and to make war against the Turks, could the less wage war on the frontier of Artois, as he continued to be hampered by the ill will of the Flemish towns. Henry VII, on the contrary, had full liberty of action, and, what made him more dangerous, he never acted on calculation or on personal resentment. It was the national sentiment of England which protested against the aggrandisement of France. The English rightly regarded the union of Brittany with the rest of the monarchy as a fatal blow to their hopes of some day regaining Normandy and Guienne. Henry VII therefore declared war against Charles VIII; however, in yielding to the enthusiasm of his subjects, he took very little part in it; for, if the historian of his reign, the chancellor Bacon, is to be believed, he proposed alone to obtain the subsidies

from parliament by flattering national vanity, and to sell to France as dearly as possible his recognition of the acquisition of Brittany.

Charles VIII had to oppose the English regular army, already increased, whose augmentation had brought taxes up to the figure of 2,300,000 livres. He collected all his supporters and obliged the principal towns of the realm to furnish him with men-at-arms. He called to his court also Perkin Warbeck, whom the Yorkists of England represented as a pretended son of Edward IV and a rival of Henry VII.

The latter passed the Channel, but not before October, after long delays, and besieged Boulogne, which would have strengthened the position on the continent which Calais already assured him. Arriving under the walls of the fortress, he found there much stronger resistance than he had expected; he received no aid from the Netherlands, and he heard that the Spaniards had begun separate negotiations with Charles VIII. These reasons decided him to sign a treaty at Étaples in the month of November. He contented himself with the payment of large sums by France as indemnity for the English troops which had served in Brittany, or as amends for the rupture of the Treaty of Picquigny and interruption of the payment of subsidies promised to Edward IV by Louis XI.

Charles VIII had undertaken separate negotiations with Ferdinand the Catholic. Roussillon and Cerdagne were objects of litigation between the crowns of Aragon and France, which had already lasted more than thirty years. Charles VIII finished by purely and simply restoring those two provinces, without even exacting reimbursement of the sums lent by Louis XI. The treaty was signed at Barcelona in January, 1493. France felt a certain astonishment at this abandonment of pretensions, on the subject of which all former offers of compromise had been refused. But notwithstanding that the question of law was not a simple one, and that the different acts of Louis XI had greatly complicated it, Charles VIII considered that, in buying the friendship of Spain at such a price, he would attain the dissolution of the coalition, assure to himself the possession of Brittany, and finally open an unobstructed road into Italy. He then made preparations to force the realm of Naples to respect the rights inherited by Louis XI through the princes of the house of Anjou. The king of Spain promised at Barcelona not to hinder his march to Italy in any way, and to furnish no aid to Ferdinand of Naples, who was of a bastard branch of Aragon, and even to aid the pretensions of France at the court of Rome, sovereign of the Two Sicilies.

There remained still Maximilian and his son, the archduke Philip, then fourteen years of age. Although these princes were for the time not redoubtable, a treaty with them presented more difficulties, as they had been more personally offended, and in sending back the princess Margaret it was not possible to preserve her dowry, stipulated in the Treaty of Arras, that is to say of Artois and Franche-Comté. Already disturbances had broken out in the two provinces. Arras, which remembered the cruelties of Louis XI, had driven out her French garrison the day after the Treaty of Étaples. Franche-Comté became insurgent in its turn. Charles VIII by a last treaty signed May 23rd, 1493, at Senlis, restored the counties of Burgundy, Artois, Charolais, and Noyon. He contented himself by sequestrating the fortresses of Hesdin, Aire, and Béthune, until the day when Philip, having reached his majority, paid him homage; and to stipulate the restitution of Tournay, Mortagne, and St. Amand, towns of the ancient domain of the crown. Maximilian finished by accepting these conditions, which after all he was not

in a position to refuse; for although his ambition was cosmopolitan, the extensiveness of his dominions and the multiplicity of interests which called him every year to a new point of Europe never permitted him to pursue to the end any enterprise of long duration. His thoughts were now turning towards the imperial throne, which the death of his father Frederick III allowed him to mount a few months later. The French government wished that, following usage, the Peace of Senlis should be guaranteed by the principal towns of Flanders, Hainault, and Artois, such as Ypres, Namur, Arras, and Valenciennes.

Historians have often reproached Charles VIII with having signed oppressive treaties at Étaples, Barcelona, and Senlis, and above all to have partly restored by the last the power of the house of Burgundy, which had been previously weakened by the Treaty of Arras. Here was in effect a sad offset to the acquisition of Brittany; but the choice had to be made between Anne and Margaret, between Brittany and Franche-Comté. If Charles VIII made a blunder it was at least more excusable than that of Louis XI, who had never been placed in the same position.

Charles VIII has also been reproached with having sacrificed the frontier and French-speaking provinces in seeking aggrandisement and conquests in a country so far removed as Italy. The conquests in Italy were bound to be ephemeral. It had been necessary in the peninsula to battle for half a century without retaining in the end a single inch of ground.

Much more would have been attained by extending the northern frontier, which was too near Paris, and by attaching again to France the provinces which gravitated around her. But it was forgotten that Charles VIII, in sending back Margaret, had no claim worth considering on Franche-Comté or the Netherlands; that he had consequently on this side no motive for war, and that he could not undertake such a war without running foul of the empire and of allied Europe.

Italy offered no such dangers. If prudence had, until now, hindered him from interfering in her revolutions, Charles VIII, having no longer any interior questions to regulate, was in a much better position than his father or grandfather had ever been. It is thus the treaties of 1492 and 1493 should be understood. In France they were judged rather unfavourably, which was natural, since they stipulated concessions and restitutions; but they were not as has been said the result of the heedless enthusiasm of a young king, sacrificing the manifest interests of his realm to the passion for foreign conquest.[k]

Charles VIII in Italy

As already suggested, the acquisition of Brittany marks the conclusion of the first period of the reign of Charles VIII. The king was now of an age to shake off the leading-strings of his sister. He was old enough to have a policy of his own, and he was soon to show that he had one. It was a policy dominated by a single thought — the conquest of Italy. In putting that sinister policy into effect, Charles VIII inaugurated a new era in French history; a new era, indeed, in the history of all Europe. France was now the most closely unified kingdom in all Europe; it aspired to become an empire.

The idea of the invasion of Italy was no doubt suggested by the fact that certain claims upon the kingdom of Naples had been bequeathed to Louis XI by Charles II of Anjou. Solicited by disaffected Neapolitans and by Lodovico

[1493 A.D.]

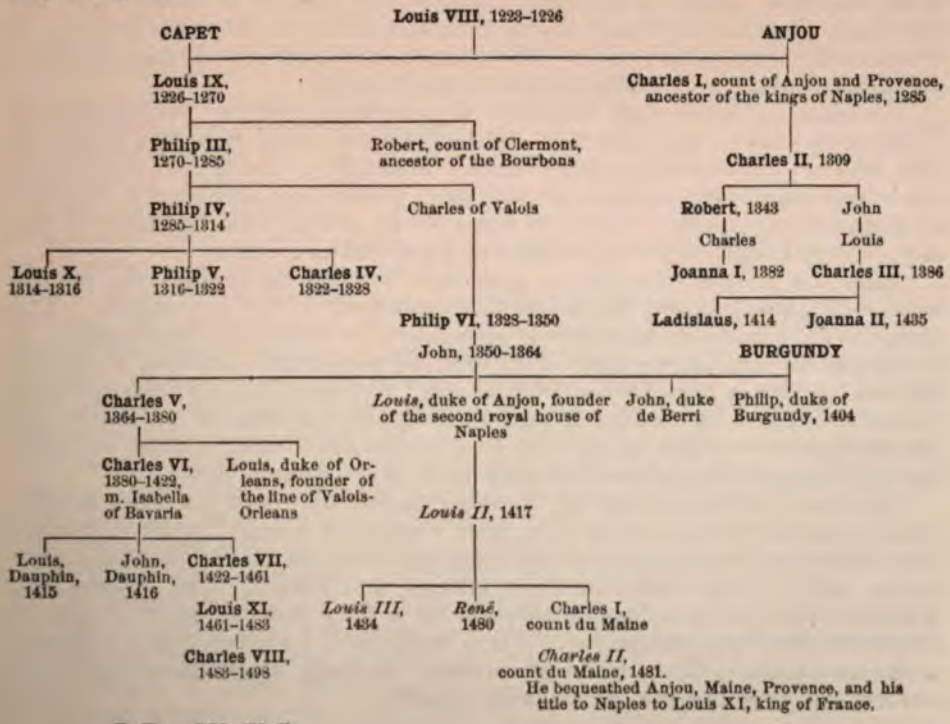
Sforza, duke of Milan, Charles VIII now determined to go to Italy and make good his hereditary claims.[1] *a*

The thought of an expedition to Italy was most seductive to a prince as young as Charles VIII, nourished on traditions of chivalry, in which the study of antiquity was mingled with souvenirs of Cæsar and Alexander. It was equally seductive to the nobility, the army, and the whole country, as flattering to the national vanity. Since the Crusades no great foreign enterprises had been undertaken by the kings in the name of the nation. The campaigns of Du Guesclin in Spain, of John the Fearless at Nicopolis, of the princes of Anjou at Naples, had been only private expeditions and had not involved France. The war in Italy reopened the era of great conquests.

In addition, this was an important epoch in French history as well as in that of all Europe. The old political system was upset. The empire was nothing more than a name at the head of what was still called Christianity. France seeking aggrandisement, the result was the prevalence of an idea of a necessary equilibrium among the great powers. This idea was not entirely new. The growth of France under Louis XI, the marriage of Maximilian of Austria to Mary of Burgundy, had already conduced to its formation. The powers observed how the rôle of diplomacy gradually grew, and conquests formed their necessary counterpoise in coalitions.

Without going back to reminiscences of the brother of St. Louis, and the protectorate assumed by France over the Guelfs of Italy two centuries before, it may be well to recall the expeditions, undertaken by the princes of the younger branch of Anjou, to seize the crown of Naples. Louis II, René,

[1] The following table will make clear the bearings of the French claim to the kingdom of Naples: Full face type denotes reigning kings of France and Naples. Italics denote titular kings of Naples.



John of Calabria, had, one after the other, claimed a succession regarded in France as a legitimate inheritance. René of Lorraine would again have followed that example in 1486, if the news that the great Angevin barons were treating with the house of Aragon had not stopped him, almost at the moment of departure. Men's minds were occupied with what Comines called "the smoke and glories of Italy." Louis XI had exercised some sort of a protectorate over the different states of the peninsula, governing Savoy and Montferrat by French princes; all-powerful at Milan; refusing the sovereignty of Genoa, which was offered to him; intervening as mediator in the dispute between Rome and Tuscany. Pius II has already stated that the greater part of the princes and people of Italy were more French than the French themselves, *Gallis Galliores*.

The Orient was also thought of. The prediction of a crusade renewed by Pius II and Sixtus IV, after the entrance of Muhammed II into Constantinople, the terror with which the Turks inspired Europe, the growth of their conquests which had not slackened, the recent heroic defence of the walls of Rhodes by Pierre d'Aubusson, grand-master of the knights of St. John, carried back public thoughts to memories whose vividness time could not alter. Although times had changed, the brilliancy and glory of the Crusades had not been forgotten. It was indeed all that tradition had kept up after two centuries. Moreover the military strength was much greater, and inspired another confidence than that of former times. If the route of Charles of Anjou were followed, the Ottoman empire could not be attacked before being sure of a base of operations at Naples, and it was hoped that the Greek Christians would rise at sight of the banners of the new crusaders.

In reality the oriental question had been asked; Europe was interested in solving it. Preparations were being made for the expedition into Italy. Each time that great events take place, public opinion is excited and the dominant ideas of the times reveal themselves in one way or another. It was now the first period of the Renaissance, in which the savants caused a perpetual confusion of antiquity and modern society.

Ancient memories had therefore a peculiar influence. Guillaume de Villeneuve, officer and historian of Charles VIII, Jean Bouchet, author of *The Life of De la Trémouille*, Comines himself, in the latter part of his memoirs — all abused ancient history, from which they borrowed a long list of comparisons; they even took occasion to compare the crossing of the Alps by the king to the similar feats of Hannibal and Cæsar.

Italy has always exercised a great and natural fascination, due to the beauty of the land and its cities, the splendour of its civilisation. The presence of so many monuments of antiquity, the study and appreciation of which had begun, had so much attraction for the French nobility, whom the Italians haughtily regarded as "barbarians," but who were far from meriting this title. The French had indeed an exaggerated idea of a country less known than we should be inclined to suppose, since nations were far from having the same intercourse that they have at the present day.

Charles VIII was, according to the Italians, who have portraits of him, small, of insignificant appearance, and expressed himself with difficulty. The desire for pleasure seemed to dominate him, and he is reproached with caring only for the chase, for dogs, falcons, and horses. The Tuscan and Venetian envoys at his court refused for a long time to believe that he could ever become a conqueror. They recognised, however, that he showed a certain natural ardour, when he assisted regularly at the reunions of his council, and reserved the decisions to himself.

[1493–1494 A.D.]

Nearly two years were consecrated to the necessary preparations. The enterprise, without being officially announced, was no secret to anyone. The Italian states were engrossed in it, and, with the exception of Milan, sent embassy after embassy to the court of France, to spy upon its actions, divine its intentions, and avert a project which menaced them all. The envoys, Florentines and others, whose correspondence has come down to us, showed infinite ability and genius in a series of delicate and difficult negotiations. But nothing proves more clearly the weakness of the government they were trying to serve than their tendency to intrigue, their perplexity, their suspicion, combined with self-deception and the duplicity of some of them.

Charles VIII, on his side also, sent envoys beyond the Alps. He wished to isolate the king of Naples, to entangle the different states in an offensive alliance against him, or at least obtain their neutrality, but a neutrality favourable to free passage over their lands. Above all he scrutinised closely the court of Rome. As he had had his rights to southern Italy examined by the parliament and the parliament had declared them valid, he demanded a similar declaration from the pope, sovereign of the crown of Naples. Alexander VI could not be relied upon very strongly — a Spaniard by birth whose election had been opposed by the French; but it was hoped to frighten him by threatening to uphold his personal enemies, who were many, and by demanding a general reform in the church, a reform equally desired by France and demanded by Maximilian and Ferdinand the Catholic.

Much as it was hoped also to find allies and resources in Italy, nothing was neglected for raising a large army, well equipped, and which should be sufficient in itself. Men-at-arms were not wanting. The difficulty was in organising them — the artillery, the wagons, and the ships necessary. Money was also needed, and to raise it every means in usage in such a case was employed. The pensions paid to the king were reduced for half a year; the treasurers were made to give advances; different loans were obtained, and an assessment was made on the banks of Milan and Genoa, and on Italian merchants; finally a particular tax was made on the clergy, under the form of a forced loan, as well as on the states of Languedoc, and several cities of the realm. All these negotiations required time, and were not concluded without difficulty. Paris and the other cities presented remonstrances, from which the Italian ambassadors concluded that the war was not popular and would not materialise.

The pecuniary difficulties, the inevitable length of the preparations, the boldness of the enterprise, the uncertainty of the political situation in Europe gave rise to a natural opposition. Several of the former councillors of Louis XI, such as M. d'Argenton (Comines), and the sire de Graville, grand admiral, expressed their doubts and fears. The duke de Bourbon saw with regret the abandonment of the prudent policy which he had followed until then, but neither he nor the duchess was any longer master of the government. Des Querdes maintained that, if it were desirable to make conquests, it would be better to look for them in the Netherlands rather than in Italy. Meanwhile the opponents generally held themselves in reserve, and sought rather to moderate the enthusiasm than to combat it.

The general rendezvous was to be at Lyons. Des Querdes, who was to have the command, died before the departure. The king resolved therefore to place himself in person at the head of his troops. He arrived at Lyons in the month of April, 1494; but preparations were not completed, and he had to wait several months before entering upon the campaign. Ships were

wanting, and it became necessary to construct a certain number for transporting one division of artillery. At last the departure took place in the month of September, although no tents, pavilions, nor other necessaries were at hand.[k]

The details of the incidents of this memorable tour[1] have already been given in our history of Italy, and need not be repeated here. We have there seen how Charles VIII was permitted to enter Florence as the friend of the people, yet came with all the presumption of a conqueror; how he went to Rome and was there received with the outward semblance of friendship by Alexander VI; and how he entered Naples and took the nominal kingship of that realm without striking a blow. It will be recalled that while the king lingered in Naples, antagonistic princes gathered in the north of Italy, and attempted to intercept the French army on its return. The French army, fatigued from its long march, and only about nineteen thousand strong, with five or six thousand servitors or guards of the transport in its train, met the Italian army of at least thirty thousand fresh and well-supplied men in the duchy of Parma near the castle of Fornovo on the right bank of the Taro, on the 5th of July, 1495.[a]

It was a brief but sharply fought battle with alternations of success and defeat for both armies. The two chief officers of the royal forces, Louis de la Trémouille and Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, sustained without wavering the shock of troops far more numerous than their own. "At their throats — at their throats!" cried La Trémouille after the first counter, and his three hundred men fell upon the enemy with sufficient force to break their ranks. During the heat of the battle the French baggage wagons were attacked by the *stradiots*, a Greek corps recruited and paid by the Venetians. "Let them alone!" shouted Trivulzio to his troops; "their ardour for pillage will make them forget everything else and we can the more easily overcome them." At one time the king was in advance of the main body of his guard and had neglected to see if they were closely following. He approached to within a hundred feet of the marquis of Mantua, who, seeing him so slimly accompanied, charged at him with all his cavalry. "It is not possible," says Comines,[d] "to strike harder blows than were given on both sides." The king, closely pressed and surrounded, defended himself valiantly against those who sought to take him. The bastard Matthew de Bourbon, his brother-at-arms and one of the bravest knights of the army, rushed forward twenty steps in advance of the king to protect him, and had just been taken prisoner when a large body of the royal troops came to the rescue of both and delivered them from peril. It was in this engagement that Pierre du Terrail, Chevalier de Bayard, at that time scarcely twenty years of age but destined later to achieve such fame, performed his first feats of arms.[2] He had two horses killed under

[1 See vol. IX, pp. 409 *et seq.*]

[2 Champier gives the following portrait of Bayard: The noble Pierre du Terrail was born at Bayard, a stronghold situated in a province of Dauphiné, called Grevesdam, near the royal castle of Avalon — which castle is a fine mansion wherein were born and bred, in this fair and beautiful spot, a family noble and ancient, in Dauphiné, by name Montenar, from whom are descended many brave knights and valiant men skilled in the art of warfare. This same Pierre was well named Terrail, for no page was a better horseman, which same by his prowess did send many to their end before their time, and in many places and on many occasions did truly guard and defend the territories of his lord and sovereign prince, the noble king of France.

The noble Bayard in his youth was kindly, gracious, and courteous to all men; none ever beheld him wrathful; he was greater than all other pages; he did harm to no woman, relinquishing intrigues with them, as being unlawful; but little given to melancholy, he was cheerful towards all, loving good company, jestings, and pleasant sport. As for his gravity, it was always mingled with kindness and affability; he loved order in all things, and was benign, merciful, and charitable. *f*]

[1495–1498 A.D.]

him, and took one standard, which he presented to the king, being rewarded by the latter after the battle with a gift of 500 crowns.[e]

As a result of the battle Charles VIII and his troops were allowed to continue their march unmolested; but their return to France partook somewhat of the nature of a retreat. It was not to be expected that a territory so distant as Naples could be held subordinate to the French crown without difficulty; and while Charles himself and his followers no doubt regarded the expedition as a great success, it was really in the sober view of posterity a most lamentable enterprise. It was fraught with all manner of deplorable sequels, as we shall see. But of course the French people could not be expected to anticipate future events, and for the moment they were able to welcome their king back to Paris as a conqueror and a hero.[a]

Death of Charles VIII

The two years which elapsed from Charles' return over the Alps to his death were marked by no event of importance. The chief expenditure and amusement that occupied him seemed to be the building and ornamenting of the castle of Amboise, for which he had brought with him eminent architects and artists from Italy. His sons perished in infancy one after the other; the name of the last, Charles Orlando, marking the favourite studies and thoughts of the monarch. In the spring of 1498 a game of ball, which interested the king, was played in the fosse of the castle of Amboise, where he resided. Charles, an affectionate husband, brought the queen to witness it. Passing in haste through the low archway of a gallery, he struck his head somewhat violently against it; for the moment the blow did not seem to affect him, but soon after, he was seized with a stroke of apoplexy, and died at the early age of twenty-seven. "Charles," says Comines,[d] "was of a small person, and little understanding; but a better creature was not to be seen."[c]

By the death of Charles VIII, the direct line of Valois was ended, and the crown was transferred to the collateral branch of Valois-Orleans, descended from Louis I, duke of Orleans, second son of Charles V.

LOUIS XII, "THE FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE" (1498–1515 A.D.)

The transmission of the crown of France to another branch of the royal house had been effected without agitation and without an obstacle; there were whispers, but in hushed voices, round Madame de Bourbon, the ancient enemy of duke Louis, that that prince had forfeited his rights by bearing arms against the crown of France in the Breton war; but no one ventured to exhibit such ideas abroad, and the new king, by his prudent and generous conduct, prevented any chance of disturbance. It would not be becoming and to the honour of the king of France to avenge the wrongs of the duke of Orleans — such was the maxim which guided the first acts of Louis XII.

He sent for the sire Louis de la Trémouille, that renowned captain who had made him prisoner at the battle of St. Aubin, and confirmed him in all his offices, rank, pensions, and advantages. He declared that he would maintain every man in his full possessions and rights, and refused to bear in mind which of the late king's servants had persuaded Charles VIII in the latter part of his life to keep the first prince of the blood in a species of exile. Finally he invited Madame Anne of France and her husband Duke Peter de Bourbon to come to him at Blois and lavished on them marks of esteem and favour of every kind; his generosity towards them even appeared to many

people to go beyond the boundaries prescribed by the interests of the state. Louis XI, in giving his daughter Anne in marriage to the sire Peter de Beaujeu, had stipulated in the contract that if Peter should inherit property from the ducal branch of the house of Bourbon (which actually happened), those great domains, although originally feminine fiefs, should return to the crown in case Peter should die without male heirs. Now Duke Peter was old and had only a daughter named Suzanne; the last great lordship (*seigneurie*) of central France was thus about to be merged in that royal domain which had successively absorbed all the great fiefs. The king allowed himself to be drawn into sacrificing this final result of the labours of Louis XI, and by letters patent of the 12th of May, 1498, he annulled the ancient contracts and treaties which excluded Suzanne from the paternal fiefs. The marriage of Suzanne with her cousin Charles de Bourbon, who like herself was still a child, secured that the heritage should not pass from that house. The parliament of Paris, accustomed to defend the permanent interests of the crown against the kings themselves, only enregistered the royal letters after a resistance of several months.



LOUIS XII

Louis XII showed no less benevolence to the good towns than to the princes and old servants of Charles VIII; he promised the citizen deputies who had come to pay him their respects to give his attention to improving the condition of the poor people; he published a severe ordinance for the repression of robberies and violences committed by the soldiers; he diminished the taxes (*tailles*) by two hundred thousand livres, and dispensed Paris and the whole kingdom from the *don de joyeux avènement*. Louis XII kept the promises of the opening of his reign: his well-directed energy, his desire to do good did not fail. The frivolous and libertine young prince had become a humane king, moderate, devoted to his duties, an economical administrator, who kept a careful watch over the public wealth, the protector of order and of justice, the equitable rewarder of merit and honesty: unfortunately he had little initiative and little breadth of mind, and the facility of his disposition placed him to an inordinate degree under the influence of those he loved. It is true that he often had the good sense and the good fortune to bestow his affections in safe keeping: his principal minister and his best friend, George d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen, who had participated in his evil fortune and who shared, not to say absorbed his power, was certainly worthy to govern the king and the kingdom, if the internal administration alone is taken into consideration; but abroad the blind and often reprehensible policy in which George involved Louis afforded a melancholy compensation for the services rendered at home.

[1498 A.D.]

Marriage with Anne of Brittany

The first months of the reign of Louis XII were filled with an important matter which touched no less the most precious interests of the realm than the private life of the king. By the marriage contract of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany the husband and wife had combined their respective rights over Brittany to the advantage of the survivor; this duchy therefore returned to the widow and was once more separated from France. Madame Anne of Brittany had already returned to her town of Nantes and had been reinstated in full possession of her sovereignty. It is true that another article of the contract, in order to obviate this separation, required the duchess not to marry again except with the successor of Charles VIII or the heir presumptive to the crown; but for twenty-two years the king had been married to the second daughter of Louis XI and had no son. Louis resolved to push aside the obstacle which separated him and the widowed queen and set to work to obtain a divorce from the deformed Joan of France in order to marry the fair sovereign of Brittany. It has been universally repeated, on the faith of certain writers, contemporaries of Louis XII, that the duke of Orleans and the duchess Anne had been previously attached to one another and that, during the Breton war, Louis had secretly contended with the other suitors for the hand of Anne. This tradition is confuted by a simple comparison of dates: when the duke of Orleans withdrew to Brittany in 1484, the princess was only eight years old: she was but twelve when he was taken prisoner at St. Aubin-du-Cormier. What does seem certain was that Landois, the intriguing favourite of Francis II, had even then suggested to Duke Louis the idea of a divorce for purely political objects, and that Duke Francis II had secretly promised his daughter to the duke of Orleans. Be that as it may, the duke of Orleans, after leaving his prison, figured without apparent repugnance in the negotiations which brought about the union of Charles and Anne and was even one of the king's witnesses at Rennes and Langeais.



ANNE OF BRITTANY
(From an old French engraving)

Whilst Charles VIII was still alive nothing indicated that the duke and the queen had feelings of tenderness for one another; they were even at one time on very bad terms — on the occasion of the death of the little dauphin Charles Orlando, the death which had made Louis heir to the crown. Anne bore a grudge against Louis for the slight sympathy he had shown for her in her maternal grief. Finally Anne gave expression to a somewhat theatrical despair on the death of Charles VIII, a husband very far from faithful, but gentle and affectionate; she was the first queen of France who wore black for mourning; hitherto the widows of kings had dressed in white, which circumstance had procured for them the title of "white queens"

(*reines blanches*). Anne assumed black as the symbol of constancy, because it cannot fade.

In spite of these demonstrations of a showy grief, the proud and ambitious Anne graciously received the first advances of the new king who proposed to her that she should not leave the throne of France, and Louis had little difficulty in persuading her to sign on the 9th of August a promise of marriage to be fulfilled as soon as might be. The king, without loss of time, had presented to Pope Alexander VI an application for the dissolution of his marriage. The circumstances were favourable: the Roman pontiff wished to withdraw his son, the cardinal De Valence (Cesare Borgia), from the ecclesiastical state that he might make him a secular prince; he had asked for him the hand of a daughter of Frederick, king of Naples. Frederick refused this shameful alliance. Alexander in his anger threw himself on the French side and undertook not only to authorise the king's divorce but to second his plans in Italy on condition that Cesare Borgia should have his share. A bull of the 29th of July charged three ecclesiastical commissioners to inquire into and take proceedings on the monarch's application. Two of these delegates, the cardinal De Luxemburg and the bishop of Albi, brother of George d'Amboise, were devoted to the king. Louis recognised this service by investing Cesare Borgia with the counties of Valentinois and Diois in Dauphiné; besides this he gave him a company of one hundred lances and a pension of 20,000 livres and promised to help the holy see to subdue the petty princes of Romagna. George d'Amboise received the cardinal's hat from Alexander VI: such was the earnest of the odious alliance which formed the ineffaceable stain on the reign of Louis XII. The excuse of the public advantage, the necessity of gaining over the pope in order to procure the divorce, closed the eyes of Louis and induced him to take the first steps; he was then unable to stop and almost his whole reign presented the aspect of two faces offering a strange contrast, the one of uprightness, good sense, and humanity at home; the other of injustice, violence, and folly abroad.

Joan of France, who had not been crowned with her husband and had not been accorded the honours of a queen, was summoned to appear on the 30th of August at the deanery of Tours before the pope's commissioners. There is something sad and ignominious about the details of this trial. Joan, resigned beforehand to a fate too clearly foreseen, defended herself solely from a sense of duty: the dissolution of the marriage was pronounced on the 17th of December and the repudiated wife withdrew to a convent at Bourges.

Louis XII now only awaited the necessary dispensation of consanguinity to marry Anne of Brittany: Cesare Borgia, whom the king had enticed into France in order to make him an instrument and who had arrived at the court in semi-royal state, was endeavouring to extort fresh favours from Louis before complying with his wishes; the bishop of Ceuta, one of the pope's commissioners, revealed to the king that the dispensation had been signed by Alexander VI and was now in Cesare's possession. Louis made ready to take further proceedings; Cesare then produced the bull which he had no further interest in keeping; but the bishop of Ceuta died a few days later — poisoned.

In the château of Nantes, three weeks after the granting of the divorce, Louis XII married the widow of Charles VIII: the marriage treaty, signed the 6th of January, 1499, by the chief nobles of France and Brittany, was much less advantageous to the crown than the contract of Langeais between

[1499 A.D.]

Charles VIII and Anne. Anne and her subjects, having in view the re-establishment of Breton independence,[1] required that the duchy of Brittany should be destined to the second child, male or female, to be born of the future marriage or, if the married couple had only one heir, to the second child of that heir; if the duchess died childless before the king, Louis was to retain Brittany during his life, but after him the duchy was to return to the next heirs of Madame Anne. As yet it was but a feeble bond which attached Brittany to France. The king swore to preserve to Brittany all its rights and liberties, its own administration judicial and political, its council, parliament, chamber of accounts (*chambre des comptes*), general treasury, and assembly of the three estates for the reform of the customs, tolls, and the levy of subsidies; he promised that benefices should only be given to natives according to the exclusive choice of the queen; that no new jurisdiction might be established and that free episcopal electors should be defended against the pretensions of the pope.

The whole conduct of Louis had shown that he desired this alliance equally as man and king: whether he had or had not loved the queen during the lifetime of Charles VIII he bore her during the whole period of their union a constant and unique affection which formed a singular contrast to the vulgar and licentious amours of his youth. It was doubtless by a kind of delicate flattery that contemporary writers traced back the origin of the king's passion to the childhood of the heiress of Brittany. The Breton duchess, who had the obstinacy rather than the sensibility of her race, made but a feeble response to this tenderness and took advantage of it to draw her docile husband into deplorable political errors.*g*

Foreign Affairs[2]

The domestic and internal affairs of the kingdom thus regulated, Louis turned his views towards Italy. He was eager to renew the successes and avenge the defeats of his predecessor. He had not only to support the claims of the house of Anjou upon Naples, but to maintain his own private right to the duchy of Milan. The Sforza, soldiers of fortune, had usurped the duchy, and founded their right on the marriage of the first Sforza with Blanche, the natural daughter of the last Visconti. Louis XI had allied with them, and had refused to permit the duke of Orleans to insist upon his heritage. No sooner did the latter become Louis XII than he assumed the title of duke of Milan, and prepared, by arms and alliances, to prosecute his claim.

Lodovico Sforza had usurped the duchy, and secured it by poisoning his nephew: he was peculiarly hateful to the French, from having been the first to entice Charles VIII into Italy, and afterwards the first to betray him. His crimes made him equally odious to his countrymen. The pope was won over by the gift of the duchy of Valentinois, which the king gave to his notorious son, Cesare Borgia. The Florentines were in the French interest, and the Venetians leagued with Louis in order to share the spoils of Lodovico. In short, when a French army entered the Milanese in the summer of 1499, it met with no resistance. The duchy submitted almost without a blow, and Lodovico fled to Innsbruck, to his only ally, Maximilian.

[1 Anne had Brittany in dangerously good order; and it has even been suggested that she intended by this move to make it almost a political necessity for Louis to marry her.]

[2 The ensuing pages should be read with constant reference to our history of Italy, vol. IX, pp. 425 *et seq.*, where a complementary treatment of the subject is given. See also the history of the Holy Roman Empire, vol. XIII.]

Lodovico returned with an army in the ensuing year. The capital rose in his favour. Trivulzio, who had been left governor of the duchy, was besieged in the town-house, and was only rescued by the audacious gallantry of some sixty knights, his followers. The French were obliged to evacuate the province. At the first tidings of the insurrection, La Trémouille marched from France to succour Trivulzio. Lodovico sought to intercept this aid by posting himself at Novara. But when the outposts of both armies touched, the Swiss in Lodovico's service learned that their comrades in the French army were better paid and treated. On the eve of action these mercenaries declared their intention of deserting to the French. Lodovico Sforza used the strongest entreaties to dissuade them; but finding them determined, he merely begged not to be delivered to the enemy. How was he to escape from Novara, in which he was in a manner besieged? The Swiss consented to allow him to mingle in their ranks, clothed as one of their soldiers. Their treachery, however, or the vigilance of the French, discovered the unfortunate Lodovico in the Swiss ranks, as they marched out of Novara. He was taken, and conveyed to France, where he was confined in the castle of Chinon until he died. Thus Louis subdued for the second time the duchy of Milan.

The conquest of Naples still remained to be achieved; but the present enmity of Maximilian king of the Romans rendered it inexpedient to undertake at present so distant an expedition, which would leave Milan exposed to the hostility of the Germans. This inability to conquer, joined with the impatience to possess, caused Louis to commit an egregious blunder. He formed an alliance with Ferdinand king of Spain, to divide between them the kingdom of Naples, to the exclusion of its reigning monarch, who was of the illegitimate race of Aragon. Louis was to have the better or northern half of the kingdom, the city of Naples included. Ferdinand, who merely wanted a pretext to obtain a footing in the peninsula, and introduce forces, was to content himself with Apulia and Calabria. Accordingly, Ferdinand sent Gonsalvo de Cordova, and Louis despatched Stuart d'Aubigny, each to conquer their respective portions, which they effected; the reigning monarch at first confiding in Gonsalvo, who of course betrayed him. Frederick of Naples, being driven from his capital and kingdom, fled first to Ischia and thence to France, where Louis gave him the duchy of Anjou as a compensation for the loss of his crown.

Louis now turned his views towards the Venetians. They had obtained Cremona, Bergamo, Brescia, the eastern territories of the duchy of Milan, as the price of their co-operation against Sforza. The king envied them this portion of his duchy, as they hated and feared the newly grown power of a foreign monarch in Italy. He endeavoured to bring Maximilian of Austria to join in an alliance against them; and a treaty was concluded, by which Maximilian promised the investiture of the duchy of Milan to Louis. Maximilian's grandson Charles (afterwards emperor) was to marry the princess Claude, the daughter of Louis. The designs, however, which the monarchs entertained against Venice were interrupted by the bad faith of Ferdinand of Spain, which began to manifest itself in Naples. The agreement by which this kingdom was partitioned between two rival powers, without any fixed line of demarcation, was necessarily rather a source of war than a seal of peace. A great portion of the country's revenue proceeded from the tax on the herds of cattle, which were yearly collected in the plains. Quarrels arose about this, and about the limits of the provinces; and war soon broke out between Gonsalvo and the duke de Nemours, who was viceroy for the French.

[1502-1503 A.D.]

He was now leagued with the Borgias — the father, the execrable pope Alexander VI; his son, Cesare Borgia, one of the heroes of Macchiavelli. They betrayed Louis at every turn; crushed and murdered his friends. Still the French king temporised; and in a treaty concluded with them at this period, he agreed to sacrifice to them several of the independent nobility of Italy — among others, the Bentivoglios and the Orsini. One of the causes of this blindness in Louis was the care which the pope took to win the favour of the cardinal D'Amboise, the French minister, whom he cajoled in a manner which was afterwards practised on Wolsey, by flattering him with the hope of succeeding to the popedom. The French were at first the strongest party in Naples. Gonsalvo retired before D'Aubigny, and shut himself in Barletta. There were several combats: one, in which the brave La Palisse was taken; another, of thirteen French against thirteen Italians, in which the Italians had the best, although their enemies assert that the advantage was won by treacherously stabbing the horses of the French knights. The Spanish monarch had recourse to artifice, his usual weapon. Seizing the opportunity of his son-in-law the archduke Philip's travelling through France, he proposed a new treaty to Louis, by which Naples was to be brought as the princess Claude's dowry to young Charles, the grandson of Ferdinand and Maximilian. Louis XII gladly and confidently agreed to these proposals. He relaxed in his exertions for reinforcing his army in Naples, while Ferdinand made use of the interval to send potent succours to Gonsalvo. The continued hostilities and successes of this captain, notwithstanding the pacific declaration and arrangement of his master, awakened Louis from his supine confidence. But it was too late. D'Aubigny was beaten by the Spaniards and taken prisoner at Seminara in Calabria, the scene of one of his former victories. On the same day of the ensuing week, the hostile commanders, Gonsalvo and the duke de Nemours, met at Cerignola. It was towards evening, and the Spaniards threw up an entrenchment before their position. The duke de Nemours would not tarry. He ordered an instant attack, which was at first successful. He himself, leading on another to support it, was slain by a bullet from an arquebuse; and his followers failing in the assault, a rout ensued, in which the French army were for the most part dispersed. Naples surrendered to Gonsalvo. Its castle was taken by mining — a mode of offence invented in these wars. Shortly afterwards, the fortress of Gaeta was the only post in the kingdom that held for the French.

Louis raised armies to attack Ferdinand in the Pyrenees and in Italy; but equally without result. The reign of the Borgias was immediately after brought to a tragical close. The pope and his son had invited several rich cardinals, their intimates, to sup with them in a vineyard. The Borgias intended to poison them; and Cesare Borgia sent some bottles of medicated wine, under the especial care of a domestic, to the spot. The pope arrived first; he was thirsty, and called for drink. The poisoned wine was poured out for him; and his son, coming in at the moment, partook of it. Pope Alexander expired soon after, and his son's life was saved only by means of antidotes and a strong constitution. Great intrigues agitated the conclave. An aged and infirm pope was elected by way of compromise. In another conclave the cardinal D'Amboise was not more successful. An Italian prelate was preferred, who soon displayed his imperious, ambitious, and warlike spirit, under the name of Julius II. Cesare Borgia had contributed to his election, in return for a promise of protection; and Julius showed his gratitude by arresting Borgia immediately afterwards. He escaped, however, and fled to Gonsalvo, who, receiving him with friendship

equally insincere, put an end to the career of this prince of intrigue by sending him prisoner to Spain. In the meantime the French army remained inactive for want of a chief. Gonzaga had been driven from the command by the taunts of the French: the marquis of Saluzzo succeeded him, but with no more success. The campaign served but to display the valour of the brave Bayard, who alone defended the passage of a bridge against a body of Spaniards for a considerable time. Gonsalvo was everywhere successful; and Gaeta, the last fortress of the French, surrendered in a panic.

The tidings of this ill fortune, and especially of the loss of Gaeta, so affected Louis that he fell into a dangerous illness. He was tended with exemplary affection by his queen, Anne of Brittany. But that prudent princess, seeing his death imminent, despatched much of her valuables to be conveyed down the Loire to Brittany. The heir to the crown, young Francis, Count d'Angoulême, then inhabited, with his mother, the château of Amboise. The marshal De Gié was the chief counsellor and influential man of this embryo court. Over zealous for the interests of the future king, and deeming Louis past hope, De Gié stopped the valuables of the queen as they descended the Loire past Amboise. Anne never forgave the insult. Louis recovered, and the marshal De Gié was pursued by the vengeance of the queen for years. He was tried; and it is a great proof of the improvement of the judicature that he escaped with life from so powerful an enemy. This circumstance increased the hatred between the mother of Francis, Louise of Savoy, and Queen Anne. By the last treaty with Maximilian it had been agreed that his grandson Charles should marry Claude, the daughter of Louis, and with her inherit the Milanese. Some time previous to the last illness of the king, Maximilian had sent an embassy to conclude and enlarge this treaty. The monarch was at the time sorely vexed by his disasters in Naples, and greatly enraged against the fickleness and bad faith of the Italian powers. Above all he was incensed against Venice; and in order to be avenged on this proud republic, he granted to Maximilian all that he asked. The cessions then made or stipulated by Louis are so enormous as to be incredible. The heirs of his daughter Claude by Charles of Luxemburg were to possess not only Milan, but the duchies of Burgundy and Brittany, thus dismembering the monarchy of France, and reducing it almost by one-half.

De Seyssel,[h] the minister and biographer of Louis, excuses his conduct on this occasion, by saying that the king merely wanted to gain Maximilian's aid against the Venetians, and that he never intended to fulfil these conditions. It seems much more probable that these stipulations were owing to the influence of Anne of Brittany; to the love of that queen for her own daughter, whose exaltation she preferred to that of France; and at the same time to Anne's hatred of Louise of Savoy, and of her son Francis, the heir to the throne. Every Frenchman was shocked and terrified at the prospect of these provinces being conveyed to a foreign power. Louis himself, listening to the advice of his counsellors, was struck with remorse at the folly and want of patriotism which characterised such measures. The states-general were called together: they drew up a strong remonstrance against them, and supplicated that the princess Claude should be given in marriage to Francis. The king consented to this. But so long as Anne of Brittany lived, she never allowed the marriage to take place.

Maximilian was of course extremely wroth on learning that the king of France and the assembly of the nation refused to fulfil the treaty. He

[1506–1509 A.D.]

resolved to attack the French in Italy. Genoa about this time had rebelled against Louis. Louis, however, conquered and reduced it to submission. Maximilian was too late to support the insurrection. The Venetians, then allies of the king, barred the passage of the Austrians into Italy. They defeated Maximilian, and compelled him to purchase a treaty, resigning his conquests. They concluded it without awaiting the consent of Louis, or allowing him to derive from it any advantage.

This was a new grievance added to the many already entertained against these republicans by the French. Maximilian was of course ready to join against them. Pope Julius was at variance with them on account of Faenza, and other towns, the wreck of the Borgian usurpations, which they held. Between these powers and Ferdinand of Spain was formed the famous League of Cambray for the destruction of Venice. It was called famous from having nearly attained its aim—a distinction which could be applied to few treaties of the time. In raising his army for this enterprise the king made an important improvement in his levies. He began to mistrust the Swiss, whose mercenary and turbulent spirit was scarcely recompensed by their character for courage. Therefore, although he hired a corps of them to the number of 6,000, he at the same time endeavoured to resuscitate the French infantry. Louis XI had abandoned the good custom of training the French peasants to arms, which had so contributed to the victories of Charles VII. The despot dreaded a national army. The armies of Charles VIII, and hitherto those of Louis XII, were composed of mounted gentlemen, who formed the cavalry, and of hired Swiss, or perhaps a few Gascons, for infantry. This was the principal reason of the first success and subsequent defeats of the French in Naples. Cavalry force, so superior when in good condition, is liable to be unhorsed, and is more easily disorganised than infantry. Louis now levied a body of infantry in France of from 12,000 to 14,000 men. To give spirit and respectability to this force, he induced his bravest captains, Bayard, Molard, and Chabannes, to fight on foot and command these new brigades; and it required all his influence to make them submit to such degradation. The French cavalry amounted to 12,000 men. With this army he marched against the Venetians. Their army, nowise inferior, was commanded by the count of Pitigliano, whose policy accorded with the orders of the senate to avoid a battle. Alviano, the Venetian general second in command, risked an attack in despite of this at Agnadello. An action took place, in which the count feebly supported his lieutenant. Louis, who fought in the thickest of the engagement, was victorious. The



FRENCH PEASANT, REIGN OF LOUIS XII

Venetian army was utterly routed; and the French king, advancing to the brink of the lagunes, enjoyed the satisfaction of sending from his cannon some vain shots against the discomfited but still unsubdued queen of the Adriatic. This success dissolved the league. Julius II, having obtained possession of the towns which he coveted from the Venetians, leagued with them against Louis; and a war, or a succession of skirmishes, ensued.

Louis sent a powerful army against the pope, under the command of Gaston de Foix, duke de Nemours, his sister's son, then twenty-two years of age. The battle of Ravenna ensued, and the French were victorious. The sack of Ravenna was almost the only fruit reaped by this signal victory. Julius II, undaunted by defeat, refused to yield. He raised up the English and the Swiss against Louis, who was threatened with invasion from both these countries. Maximilian let loose upon Milan his namesake, Massimiliano Sforza, son of Lodovico; and the Swiss espoused the youth's pretensions. The cantons were enraged against Louis for attempting to substitute French soldiers for them. When he sent La Trémouille to negotiate with them, they demanded that 15,000 Swiss should be yearly hired, and paid by France in peace and war. They demanded also the Milanese for Sforza, and the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction for the pope. It is said they also resented some injurious words spoken by Louis. Whatever was its cause, their resentment was but too well seconded by their force. The French under La Palisse and Trivulzio were driven out of the Milanese, and even Genoa again declared itself independent. The feats of Bayard during this unfortunate campaign might be made to fill pages, but they availed nothing. Haute-Navarre was at the same time wrested by Ferdinand from Jean d'Albret. The province has ever since remained to the Spaniards.[c]

Internal Affairs

Neither the war of Genoa nor that of Venice had interrupted that universal movement of internal improvement in France, which, begun under Charles VIII, had gone on and increased under Louis XII. The foundation of this progress lay, above all, in the vitality of the nation itself; next in the good supervision given to the legislation, administration, and finances by the appointed members of council and parliament; but to the prime minister was due the merit of having given to all this activity a united impulse, and to the king the merit of zealous participation therein.

During the winter of 1509 Louis visited a large portion of his kingdom, and did much good in regard to the execution of justice. Never at any epoch of its history had France enjoyed so much prosperity; the twenty years' absence of all civil disorders, the maintenance of order by an absolute and vigilant administration, the security of people and property, the protection given to the weak against the stronger, to the labourers against the nobles and soldiers, bore marvellous fruits. The population increased rapidly, the cities in their ancient limits constantly expanded into large suburbs; hamlets and villages rose up as if by enchantment in the woods and waste places. The last vestiges of the fatal wars that had depopulated France were completely effaced, and Seyssel, a contemporary writer, states that a third of the kingdom had again been put under cultivation during the last thirty years. The produce of the land increased enormously; the excise taxes, tolls, fees, etc., had increased more than two-thirds in many places, and the revenue of the royal estate, augmenting like the private ones, allowed the king to carry out his enterprises without oppressing the nation.

[1509–1510 A.D.]

Industry and commerce received no less an impetus, communications were endlessly extended, and merchants made less of going to Rome, Naples, or London than formerly to Lyons or Geneva. The luxury and elegance of buildings, furniture, and apparel displayed the progress of the arts and public wealth. The condition of all classes was improved, and the poor, unaccustomed to see the sovereigns take such care of their interests, were deeply grateful to the king and his minister. "Let George do as he thinks right," had become a popular saying expressing the confidence placed in Cardinal Amboise. Louis XII received striking testimonies of the affection of the people on a journey he took from Paris to Lyons through Champagne and Burgundy in the spring of 1510. "Wherever he went, men and women assembled from all parts, following him for three or four leagues, and when they were able to touch his mule or his dress, or anything belonging to him, they kissed their hands with as much devotion as they would show to a reliquary." (Saint-Gelais.) The Burgundians displayed as much enthusiasm as the ancient French.

Cardinal George did not reap his share in the popular homage. The inseparable companion of Louis XII had not accompanied him on this journey; whilst the health of the king was improving somewhat, that of the minister was rapidly declining. George, weakened by gout and other infirmities, had not the strength to resist an epidemic, called "whooping cough" by contemporary historians. Louis XII found him dying at Lyons, whither the cardinal had gone to await the king, and had only the consolation of receiving the farewells of his "faithful friend." Cardinal Amboise expired May 25th, 1510. He had not yet reached the age of forty-five. He was the first of those cardinal-ministers, almost kings, who have played so large a part in the history of the monarchy. The experiment was not encouraging, for the duties of Cardinal Amboise were altogether foreign to his ecclesiastical dignity, and his faults, on the contrary, largely proceeded from it. His dream of the papacy and his dealings generally with the college of cardinals and the holy see were very detrimental to the interest and the honour of France.

His home administration saves his memory. He does not shine therein by disinterestedness, but that was never the distinguishing virtue of great ministers, and is scarcely compatible with monarchical government. He left a vast fortune, amassed rather at the expense of Italy than of France; his use of it at least pleads for his memory. Many touching anecdotes attest his goodness of heart; the fine remains of those buildings mutilated by the hand of the Revolution show us the use to which his wealth was put. Like all men of superior talents, whether princes or ministers, who have left their mark upon the destinies of nations, George was the centre of the art movement, and diffused a vivifying influence around him. One of the most beautiful periods of French art belongs to his ministry; it has been incorporated too long with the reign of Francis I, who during his best years merely continued, whilst enlarging it, and who took the first step towards decadence when he departed from it.

The artistic history of France in the sixteenth century may be divided into two periods: in the first, Italian art modifies French art by some happy innovations, and incites it to a healthy emulation; in the second, it stifles and absorbs it. In the first period, the Italian artists summoned to France concur with native artists in raising French monuments; in the second, the Italianised French build Italian monuments — vanquished Italy conquers her conquerors. *g*

Last Years of Louis XII

The internal prosperity of France contrasted strangely with the conditions of interminable warfare that characterised the external policy of Louis XII. The seat of these wars was not confined to Italy. In 1513 France became embroiled with her old enemy, England.

Henry VIII of England invaded France in concert with Maximilian. He laid siege to Thérouanne. The French succeeded in throwing supplies into the town; but being attacked suddenly some days after by the English and imperialists, they were seized with a panic and fled. This has been called the battle of Spurs. Bayard, who refused to join in the flight of his compatriots, was made prisoner after a gallant defence. Thérouanne was the sole conquest of Henry.[c] But almost simultaneously the French arms were checked in Burgundy and in Italy. In fact, the year 1513 has been pronounced (by Dareste[b]) one of the most disastrous in French military annals. Yet no very important political sequels were attached to these reverses.[a]

In January, 1514, Louis lost his queen, Anne of Brittany. She was a woman of distinguished beauty, though she limped in her gait. She possessed great influence over Louis: was proud, independent, and obstinate — qualities characteristic of the Bretons. Anne was at the same time a pious, chaste, and exemplary queen. It was through her influence and importance that the female sex, hitherto excluded, was introduced into society: she formed a court, and collected around her the principal young ladies of rank in the kingdom, whose manners and principles she loved to form. The establishment of a court, that is, of a court in which woman's presence was allowed and her influence felt, was, trifling as it may seem, a most important innovation.



Louis XII
(From an old French print)

Louis, attached as he had been to Anne, did not long delay to fill up the place by her left vacant. Policy joined with other reasons to prompt this step. As the seal of a reconciliation and alliance with Henry VIII, Louis espoused that monarch's sister Mary, a princess then in the flower of her age. The gay habits of a bridegroom did not suit the constitution of the king, then past fifty-four. In a few weeks after his marriage he was seized with a fever and dysentery, which carried him off at the palace of the Tournelles, in Paris, on the first day of the year 1515.

Never was monarch more lamented by the great mass of his subjects than Louis XII. He was endeared to them principally by his economy and forbearance in levying contributions, and by his strict administration of justice, so different from the sanguinary executions which characterised the reign of Louis XI, when no man could be certain of life. He reduced the taxes more than one-third in the early part of his reign, and even in his distresses preferred selling the crown lands to any of the usual expedients for exaction.

[1515 A.D.]

Hence Louis earned the appellation of "Father of his people." His popularity was much greater with the middle than with the higher classes. The latter called his economy parsimony, and his sympathy with the commons forgetfulness of his rank. Writers of the reigns of Louis XIV and XV seek to depreciate the character of Louis XII, and to elevate that of his successor. Louis XII they consider as the *roi roturier*, "the plebeian king"; Francis as the aristocratic and chevaleresque. The nobility certainly do not appear prominent in this reign. New names arise and become illustrious as in the time of Charles VII. The lesser noblesse or gentry were in fact treading on the heels and taking the places of the higher aristocracy. The latter rallied or were re-created in the days of Francis, but these tendencies were as much the effect of opposite states and circumstances, as of the opposite characters of the two monarchs.

The writers of the Revolution reverse the system of favouritism: they choose Louis, the father of his people, to be their hero, and they depreciate the kingly Francis. An author of this school, Roederer,[i] has seen every perfection in Louis XII, and he considers that the commons of France were in possession of perfect constitutional freedom during his reign: history, however, does not present this view of the question. Although Louis did certainly seem to allow in the parliament a power of examining and objecting to his edicts, yet the assembly of states in his reign was far from assuming or being allowed aught like a constitutional control. The very virtues and moderation of Louis were inimical to political freedom, since, by rendering the commons contented, they took from them, with the wish, the right of remonstrance. Had a prodigal and an unpopular king been reduced to the same distress as Louis was in the latter years of his reign, the commons of France might opportunely have made a stand for their privileges, and at least kept alive their traditions of freedom.[c]





CHAPTER XII

IMPERIAL STRUGGLES OF FRANCIS I AND HENRY II

[1515–1559 A.D.]

Francis I, his government and his times, commence the era of modern France, and bring clearly to view the causes of her greatnesses and her weaknesses. — GUIZOT. [b]

CRITICAL SURVEY OF FRANCIS I AND HIS PERIOD

THE accession of Francis I to the crown of France, January 1st, 1515, on the death of Louis XII, may be considered as signalising the passage from the Middle Ages to modern times and from ancient barbarism to civilisation. The transformations of great masses of men amongst whom new ideas and new passions are seen to germinate, are never sudden; centuries have prepared them in silence, and an attentive eye may have discerned, in the preceding age, the authors of the age which is about to open; but their action on the people has an element of the unexpected, because the men whose minds have been formed in principles and sentiments scarcely avowed by themselves, and scarcely understood by their contemporaries, all at once perceive that they form the majority, that they are understood, that they will be followed; and they burst as it were upon the country which had not noticed them. Thus simultaneously with the reign of the young monarch there began a decided taste for arts and letters which signalised itself by the most glorious monuments; a new zest for the pleasures of society, for wit, and for gallantry which corrupted morals while it perhaps gave more elegance to manners; an esteem for learning, a zeal for study which reflected a special glory on the French magistracy in whom dignity of character soon joined itself to knowledge; and finally an independence of opinions which, while admitting men to judge what they had adored, led some to new systems of philosophy and others to the reform of religion. France, hitherto poor in writers, began to turn her attention to herself, to study herself; her follies and vices, like her virtues and learning, left their traces; and there came into being the double series of courtly and philosophic writers, of the friends of disorder and those of wisdom — a series which was not afterwards interrupted until the fall of the throne of Louis XVI.

[1515 A.D.]

The new sovereign, Francis d'Angoulême, duke of Valois, who gave the signal for this revolution, was not however of sufficient force to produce it. He was a son of Charles d'Angoulême, cousin german of Louis XII, and as he had been born at Cognac on the 12th of September, 1494, he was only twenty years and a few months old. His education had been begun by Marshal de Gié, whom Louis XII had replaced in 1506 by Arthur Gouffier,



FRANCIS I

sire de Boisy ; this last had been through all the Italian campaigns, and he had acquired in that country a taste for arts and polite literature which was scarcely ever to be met with amongst other men of noble rank. He perceived that a certain glory might be attached to the study of letters, he even accustomed his pupil to show some deference to men of learning and to seek their conversation ; but if Boisy himself took pleasure in reading, it was in vain that he endeavoured to inspire the prince he was training with

the desire to read any books other than the romances of chivalry. It was from them that Francis I derived his sole instruction; he modelled himself on the heroes of the Round Table and of the palace of Charlemagne, not on those of history; he desired to shine as an Amadis rather than as a sovereign; and the height of his figure, the beauty of his face, his skill in arms and in all physical exercises, his bravery which he had already had occasion to exhibit, and finally his love of pleasure which his young comrades esteemed in him more than his moral qualities, marked him out for the admiration of those who, like himself, knew the world only through the medium of romances. "He was as fair a prince," said Bayard's *Loyal Serviteur*,[c] "as ever was in the world; never had there been a king in France who so rejoiced the noblesse."[d]

A BRILLIANT CAMPAIGN IN ITALY

After the coronation, which was celebrated at Rheims with great pomp, and the festivities of the royal entrance in Paris, the preparations for the expedition into Italy begun by Louis XII were resumed without delay. France possessed nothing beyond the Alps since the fort at the Lantern or Fanal at Genoa had capitulated. Everyone expected to see the French retake the Milanese; but Francis I anticipated the general expectation — he wished that conquest to mark the first year of his reign.

Two things were necessary: to hinder a coalition of the great powers, and to find allies. The coalition had been dissolved in the year previous; in order that it should not be formed again two treaties were signed, with England and with the Netherlands. Henry VIII, always displeased with the way in which the other kings had abandoned him, consented to renew the alliance he had sworn with Louis XII in 1514. The young prince of Castile, Charles of Austria, freed from guardianship, took the direct government of the Netherlands, and prepared to cross into Spain; he was the first to try to regain the friendship of France, in order to secure the Belgian frontier. It was agreed that he should be affianced to Madame Renée, the second daughter of Louis XII, who had a large dowry, and that he might defer for five years the homage he owed to the crown in his character of count of Flanders. On the part of Francis I, the concessions were important but remote and eventual: the advantage was immediate. France, safe-guarded in the north on its most vulnerable frontier, and having nothing to fear from England nor the Netherlands, might proceed boldly.

France had wished to gain the court of Rome. Leo X had never ceased seeking reconciliation with France. His brother, Giuliano de' Medici, had married a sister of Louise of Savoy in 1514. Several ambassadors were sent to him, among others the celebrated humanist, Guillaume Budé. But the pope desired peace in Italy and the grandeur of his family. A new French campaign would derange his plans, and for some months he had done everything possible to dissuade the French from such an enterprise. He refused to bind himself in any way, even that of simple neutrality.

There still remained Ferdinand the Catholic, Maximilian, and the Swiss. The king of Aragon was old and in failing health. His death was shortly expected, and he was known to be little in favour of taking the management of a new league. It was he who, by his withdrawal, had caused the failure of that of 1513. Meanwhile, fearing to lose the alliance of the Swiss, and wishing to hinder the return of the French into the peninsula, he refused to prorogue the truce of the preceding year, and signed a defensive alliance

[1515–1516 A.D.]

with Maximilian and the thirteen cantons. The emperor always had need of Spanish troops to continue his war against Venice; he objected all the more to the troubling of the empire by France by her levies of lansquenets. But his hostility was as harmless as his friendship was useless. As for the Swiss, finding them rejecting all offers and manifesting unqualified unreasonableness, the plan to conciliate them was abandoned. The alliance with the Venetians was always assured. Francis I renewed the treaty signed at Blois by Louis XII with the republic.

After these diplomatic precautions it was necessary to renew and strengthen the army. The gendarmerie was increased from 2,500 lances to 4,000. A national infantry was added to it, also more numerous than that of preceding years, 6,000 Basques and Dauphinois, 10,000 French adventurers, Picardians, Gascons or Bretons, and 3,000 pioneers or engineers. Part of these troops were formed by Pedro Navarro, prisoner of the French since the battle of Ravenna. The celebrated Spanish captain, not having obtained from Ferdinand the Catholic the payment of his ransom, consented to enter into the service of Francis I. The foreign infantry was composed of 26,000 lansquenets under the command of the duke of Gelderland. The artillery, more important than ever, comprised 72 large cannon, and 500 mounted pieces.*f*

Thus equipped, Francis crossed the Alps and entered upon that campaign which culminated in the brilliant victory over the Swiss army at Marignano, a full description of which has been given in our history of Italy.[1] *a*

It is related that, after the battle, Francis wished to be knighted and that he chose Bayard to give him the blow with the sword; a thing never before seen, as it was supposed that kings had no need of being knighted, as they were knights by birth.*f*

The victory of Francis resulted in his regaining possession of the whole of the Milanese, with the addition of Parma and Piacenza. He also signed two treaties, on November 7th, 1515, at Geneva, and November 29th, 1516, at Friburg, which established a perpetual alliance between himself and the Swiss.

The Concordat

In the course of an interview between himself and Leo X at Bologna, Francis took the important step of abolishing the Pragmatic Sanction and signed the Concordat, which gave the king the right of nomination to bishoprics and other ecclesiastical privileges. "Then it was that Francis I and his chancellor loudly proclaimed the maxims of absolute power; in the church, the Pragmatic Sanction was abolished; and in the state, Francis I during thirty-two years did not once convoke the states-general and laboured only to set up the sovereign right of his own will."*h*

The first article of the Concordat, destined to replace the Pragmatic Sanction, transferred to the king the right to appoint the bishops, abbots, and priors, the pope reserving for himself the veto, in cases where the elect did not fulfil canonical conditions; by the second article, the pope renounced the rights of reversion and expectative, the reversion of livings during the life of the incumbents; but he did not renounce in any way the annats, the most exorbitant of papal exactions, and the silence of the Concordat on this subject implied their re-establishment. The rights of collators of livings were subsequently recognised and limited, and it was decreed that collators

[1 See vol. IX, Chapter XV, for the complementary account of this and the subsequent Italian campaigns of Francis I.]

could accord only to graduates "*ès universités*" the livings which became vacant during the months of January, April, July, October. Every collator, having from ten to fifty livings at his disposal, was obliged to resign one to the discretion of the pope — or two if he had more than fifty. It was ordained that ecclesiastical trials should be judged in the realm, either by ordinary judges or by commissioners of the pope in reserved cases. The Concordat kept a significant silence on the rights and periodicity of the councils. A tithe on the clergy was accorded to the king, in recognition of the re-establishment of annats, but on condition that the pope and the Medici should receive their part. The abolition of the Pragmatic was then proclaimed in the Lateran Council, a servile assembly which did nothing but register the wishes of the pope, which abjured the principles of the councils of Constance and Bâle, and dissolved itself obscurely shortly afterwards, without the perception by Europe, so to speak, of its closing.

The Concordat was an act of boldness on the part of royalty; which ceded only on a question of money (and reduced that concession when it came to practice). It was an immense stride in the direction of despotism: after the political order it seized upon the religious order; after having usurped the right of the Estates in the fixation of taxes, it usurped the right of the church in the election of its chiefs. In fact during the whole extent of the Middle Ages, the temporal power frequently troubled the liberty of elections, sometimes by force, more often by recommendations equivalent to commands. The ecclesiastical bodies were rarely in full enjoyment of their liberty, and the ancient participation of the people, and even of the lower clergy, at the election of the bishops had been reduced to a purposeless acclamation. But in the end the law remained, the best kings having recognised it, the Pragmatic had revivified it, and after the great reaction directed by the councils of the fifteenth century against the papacy, the chapters and convents proceeded more freely at elections than at any period of the preceding centuries. It was this state of things which Francis I and Leo X violently overturned in their division of what did not belong to them by a bizarre exchange where, as Mézeray says, the pope, the spiritual head, took the temporal power unto himself, giving the spiritual power to a temporal prince.[k]

This displacement of the Pragmatic Sanction by the Concordat is justly regarded as one of the most momentous events in French history. The effect of the new order of things upon the immorality of the upper clergy can hardly be overestimated. The Concordat remained in force until the Revolution, and much of French scepticism and philosophical criticism may be ascribed to its influence.

STRIFE BETWEEN FRANCIS I AND CHARLES V

The reign of Francis I thus opened brilliantly. That first victory was to have no complete parallel during a long reign; but it served to establish the reputation of Francis as a warrior, and to cast a glamour about his name that no subsequent defeats could quite obscure. We are now to see the victor of Marignano enter upon a struggle with that crafty monarch Charles I of Spain,[1] who, when the emperor Maximilian died, was elected to succeed him, and who came to the imperial throne as Charles V. The life-long

[1 Charles had succeeded Ferdinand the Catholic, who died in 1516. Francis made no murmur when Charles entered into his vast heritage; indeed, he signed a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with him at Nyon in 1516. France gained nothing by it except the restitution to Jeanne d'Albret of Basse-Navarre, which Ferdinand had seized. But Maximilian's death in 1519 changed the whole face of affairs.]

[1520 A.D.]

rivalry with this most powerful monarch of the century furnishes the key-note to the reign of Francis I. Francis had himself been an eager candidate for the imperial crown.[a] His mortification was great when his rival was chosen by the electors. He dreamed of nothing but revenge, and fancied that an alliance with Henry VIII of England would help him to gain his object. A meeting was consequently arranged between the two kings, and took place on June 7th, 1520. So gorgeous were the garments of the kings and the trappings of their horses, that their courtiers in trying to rival them "bore thither," the contemporary writer Du Bellay[g] graphically tells us, "their mills, their forests, and their meadows, on their backs."

Meeting of Henry VIII and Francis I on the Field of the Cloth of Gold

Nothing equalled in splendour this meeting between the two kings and the two courts in the camp so well named "The Cloth of Gold." It was a struggle upon both sides for pre-eminence in magnificence. It would seem as if they sought more to dazzle than to please, and etiquette, being prejudicial to cordiality, was set aside.

Both arrived on the same day, June 1st, 1520, the one at Calais, the other at Ardres. Henry VIII and Francis I exchanged visits through the most important personages of their courts and councils. Six days passed in the necessary negotiations for their meeting. All was at last arranged with a care so distrustful and minute as to suggest a mutual fear of treason. It was arranged that, leaving the castle of Guines, whither he expected to go on June 5th, Henry VIII should advance towards Francis I, who, on his side, would leave the castle of Ardres, and advance towards Henry VIII.

On Wednesday, June 7th, the kings of France and of England, mounted upon great chargers, clothed the one in cloth of gold, the other in cloth of silver, covered with pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, their heads covered by velvet caps resplendent with precious stones, from which floated magnificent white plumes, set out at the same time and at the same pace. Their constables preceded them, bare sword in hand, and the lords of their court, most gorgeously apparelled, followed in their train. Each of them was followed by a bodyguard of four hundred archers or men-at-arms. Thus escorted they descended the two hills which led into the pleasant plain of the Valdoré, where a pavilion had been erected to receive them. Their appearance was more that of two knights marching to battle than two princes going to a diplomatic interview.

The escort halted at a certain point, from whence they kept watch, so that the English archers should not approach too closely to the king of France, nor the men-at-arms of the French army to the king of England. At a short distance from each other, Henry and Francis spurred their horses, reining them in with all the grace of the experienced cavalier, when they found themselves side by side. Saluting one another in kingly fashion they then dismounted and entered the pavilion arm in arm. Cardinal Wolsey and Admiral Bonnivet, who, since the death of his brother the grand-master, Arthur de Boisy, had been the favourite of Francis I and managed his affairs, preceded them.

Francis I showed great cordiality to Henry VIII, and, giving utterance to the thought always present with him, proffered him his assistance in the hope of gaining his. "Dear brother and cousin," said he, "I have taken much trouble to see you. You understand, I hope, that I am ready to help you with the kingdoms and lordships which are under my authority."

Henry VIII, evading any pledge, relieved himself from the obligation of helping Francis I, by not accepting the assistance offered. He contented himself with assurances of his friendship, which he still made conditional. "I have not in view your kingdoms or your lordships," answered Henry VIII, "but loyalty and the instant execution of promises contained in the treaty drawn up between us. If you keep these, my eyes have never beheld a prince who could win more the affection of my heart."

They then examined the treaty which had been drawn up that evening, and by which, conforming to the agreement of the 4th of October, 1518, the dauphin of France was to marry the only daughter of the king of England, and Francis I was to pay an annual sum of 100,000 francs, which is equivalent to more than 2,000,000 francs of modern money, until the celebration of the wedding, which was yet far distant. Whilst reading the introduction to the treaty, in which, according to diplomatic etiquette, the title of king of France was added to that of king of England and of Ireland, Henry VIII said with tact: "I will omit it. In your presence it is not correct." But if he omitted it in reading, he left it in the treaty, and a little later was ambitious to make it real by invading France and wishing to reign there. After some discussion, following the custom of that time the sovereigns took wine together, and admired the nobles of their courts, whom they presented to one another and who were embraced, those of France by the king of England, those of England by the king of France. As the meetings, so the fêtes were regulated and carried through in a very ceremonious manner, with precautions that excluded intimacy, and requirements which betrayed jealousy. When Francis I went to dine with Queen Catherine at Guines, Henry VIII came to dine with Queen Claude at Ardres. The two kings held hostages for one another, and behaved in many ways as if they were in the presence of enemies. This suspicious attitude, these timid steps, were as little suited to the political views as to the trusting character of Francis I.



THE DAUPHIN FRANCIS, SON OF FRANCIS I

Wishing one day to break down this ceremonious and distrustful barrier, he arose earlier in the morning than was customary, and taking with him two gentlemen and a page, and wrapped merely in a Spanish cape, he left Ardres to go and surprise the king of England in Guines. Two hundred archers and the governors were upon the drawbridge when he arrived. At the sight of the king of France, come at such a time, so meagrely attended, putting himself thus in their hands, they were aghast. Francis I crossed their ranks with a frank and laughing countenance, and, as if he wished to take the fortress by storm, summoned them gaily to surrender to him. The king of England still slept. Francis I went straight to his room, knocked at the door, awoke Henry VIII, who, on seeing him, was even more astounded than his archers had been, and said frankly, with as much cordial-

[1520 A.D.]

ity as tact: "My brother, you have done me the best turn that one man ever did to another, and showed me what confidence I ought to have in you. From this moment I am your prisoner, and pledge you my faith." He took at the same time a beautiful collar from his neck and begged the king of France to wear it that day for love of his prisoner. Francis I went still further in his demonstrations. He had a bracelet double the value of the collar. Putting this upon Henry's arm he asked him to wear it for love of him, and he added that he wished for that day to be valet to his prisoner. The king of France as a matter of fact handed the king of England's shirt to him. The next day Henry VIII, imitating the confidence of Francis I, went to Ardres slightly attended, and there took place a fresh exchange of presents and courtesies between them.

This attempt to rival each other in friendship was followed by a rivalry of skill in the tournaments and games that the two kings held at their courts. Spacious lists, which ended in strong enclosures for the guards of each prince and which adjoined elegant stands erected for the queens and the ladies-in-waiting, had been prepared in a high and uncovered place. There for eight days were held jousts in which the most skilful men-at-arms of France and England took part on foot and on horseback, with lance and sword. The two kings who directed them displayed therein without contention, the one his brilliant dexterity, the other his athletic strength. Francis I, who excelled in horsemanship, broke his lances with an accomplished skill. Henry VIII, whose impetuosity could not be resisted, struck his antagonist's helmet so violently that he unseated him, and prevented him from fulfilling his other engagements.

King Henry, who was one of the best bowmen in the kingdom, made himself remarkable by the strength with which he drew the string and the swiftness with which he struck his mark; he would also have liked to show his superiority in wrestling with Francis I. The English wrestlers had defeated the French wrestlers because through negligence the latter had not brought with them the Bretons, who are unsurpassed in this sort of game. In the evening Henry VIII, hoping to complete the victory of his men by an easy triumph, came close to Francis I and said to him roughly, "Brother, I want to wrestle with you." At the same time he grasped him with his powerful hands and tried to throw him; but Francis I, who was a well-trained wrestler and more lithe, twisted his leg around his assailant, so that the latter lost his balance and rolled on the ground. Henry arose, crimson with confusion and anger, and wished to begin again. Only the fact that dinner was ready and that the queens intervened prevented this dangerous test, which was more likely to make bad friends of the two kings by wounding their vanity, than the recent intimacies of their long interview were likely to cement their friendship. After twenty-five days passed together in the midst of festivals and pleasures, Francis I and Henry VIII separated, apparently in cordial friendship.

Francis I and Charles V at War

Francis I was not certain of the armed co-operation of Henry VIII, but he believed he had secured his interested and, from thenceforward, faithful friendship. He had bought it by a large annual payment which was simply a subsidy in disguise. He flattered himself that if the king of England failed to declare himself on his side in the war about to begin, at all events he would not espouse the cause of the emperor, his enemy.[h]

But this interview was nothing more than play-acting, as Francis soon realised when he learned that Henry on his way back to England had paid a visit to Charles V, who was close friends with Wolsey. Furious at this duplicity and at learning that Henry VIII had agreed to arbitrate on Charles' behalf in all quarrels between him and France, Francis cast about for a pretext for war, and soon found occasions in the Low Countries, Navarre, and Italy. In April, 1521, he despatched Marshal de Lautrec to defend the Milanese against the Spaniards.[a]

The government of the conquered province had been such as to render the French yoke odious to the Milanese. The cause lay in the intrigues and corruption of the court. As soon as the government has grown despotic, we are instantly compelled to look for the causes of events in the scandalous chronicle of harlotry. It has been related that Anne, queen of Louis XII, had assembled around her the daughters of the French nobility; and a court was thus gradually formed, no longer composed solely of warriors and statesmen, but of the gay and idle also of both sexes. This sudden freedom had an ill effect upon public morals. The principles and habits of courtiers were not prepared for the increased temptation. The grossness of the age did not yet admit of that true and pure enjoyment of female society which modern cultivation allows. Francis, when he was suddenly released from Amboise, and found himself possessed of all power, and endowed with all attraction, in the midst of an assemblage of beauty, gave a loose rein to his passions. His wife, Claude, daughter of the late king, never had the command of his affections; and the court of Francis soon arrived at that state of dissoluteness which we find recorded in the pages of Brantôme, and from which we shrink in incredulity and disgust.



A French Baron, Early Sixteenth Century

Françoise de Foix was one of those high-born maidens whom Anne of Brittany had reared near her person. That queen had given her in marriage to the count de Châteaubriant, who retained her at his remote château, far from the fascinations of a court. Francis, however, insisted on the presence of the beauty. The countess de Châteaubriant was summoned to the capital, and soon became the avowed and chosen mistress of her sovereign. Her brother Lautrec was made governor of Milan.[b] In spite of Lautrec's efforts Milan fell into the enemy's hands, and on April 27th, 1522, he lost a battle which robbed Francis of all his power in Lombardy. This was the battle of Bicocca, in which Prospero Colonna, occupying an entrenched position, repulsed the French and inflicted upon them a decisive defeat.[c]

Defection of the Duke de Bourbon

The rage of Francis against his unsuccessful general was extreme. He refused to see him. The duchess d'Angoulême exasperated the king's animosity by her censures; while Madame de Châteaubriant dared not inter-

cede for her brother. At length the constable procured Lautrec admission to the king, who covered him with reproaches. "It is not I who am to blame," said Lautrec; "the gendarmerie have served eighteen months without pay; and the wilfulness of the Swiss, both in fighting against my wish and then abandoning me, was owing to my inability to pay them."

"And the 400,000 crowns?" said the king. "Were never received," was the answer. Francis summoned his treasurer, Semblançay, and asked him sternly how it came that the promised sum had not yet reached Lautrec. The treasurer replied that the duchess d'Angoulême had made him pay it to her. The king then rushed to the apartments of his mother. "It is to your avarice then, madam, that I owe the loss of the Milanese?" The duchess could not deny the receipt of the sum, but she alleged having received it on her private account. The excuse did not satisfy the monarch, and Semblançay kept his station. The vengeance of the queen-mother henceforth unremittingly followed the unfortunate treasurer. Heads of accusation can never be wanting against a man intrusted with the finances of a kingdom; and five years after, Semblançay, an honest and irreproachable minister, fell a victim to the intrigues and iniquity of the monarch's mother, and died as a malefactor on the common gibbet.

Whilst Francis met with these reverses, which were the natural consequences of the blunders and recklessness of his administration, the emperor Charles was carefully securing every friend, and improving every advantage. The new pope, Adrian, was his creature: Wolsey's resentment, on being disappointed of the tiara, was soothed for a time; and Henry VIII was induced not only to break with France, but to send thither an army under the duke of Suffolk, which, however, achieved nothing remarkable. The Venetian Republic, also, the last of the Italian powers that inclined to France, was estranged from his friendship, and joined the alliance against him. Not content with making every foreign potentate his foe, the French monarch had at the same time the imprudence to alienate the most powerful of his subjects. Trivulzio, we have seen, expired beneath his neglect. Charles, duke de Bourbon, and constable of the kingdom, was now driven by injustice to league with the enemies of his country. The last duke de Bourbon had left a daughter, Suzanne. The title, and a certain portion of the heritage, went by law to the male heir; but as a considerable part would be inherited by Suzanne, the paternal care of Louis XII arranged a marriage between Charles, the existing duke, and Suzanne de Bourbon, thus preserving unbroken the heritage and title of that illustrious family. The duke was of a handsome person, and on the death of his duchess, Suzanne, without issue, the duchess d'Angoulême made advances to fill her place. This she was the more forward in doing, as, being descended in the female line from a previous duke de Bourbon, she considered herself to have claims on that part of the property which might descend to a female. The constable, however, was blind to her advances, backed by this tacit menace. And the slighted duchess instantly put forward her claim to the Bourbonnais as appertaining by right to her.

Bourbon had previously received affronts from the king, who disliked his cold temper and reserved demeanour. The duke was grave and dignified, fond of war and business, and averse to join in the follies of a court. It appears, too, that Francis amused himself at the duke's expense; and the latter bore raillery with so little good humour as to be called the "prince of small endurance." Whatever was the cause, they certainly disliked each other; and Francis manifested this feeling first by recalling Bourbon from

the government of Milan, and afterwards by giving the command of the vanguard in one of the northern campaigns to the duke of Alençon, although that post of honour was the constable's right.

Bearing all this in mind, when his hitherto unquestioned right to the Bourbonnais was called in question, the duke instantly apprehended that a league to destroy him had been planned by the king and his mother. Duprat, the chancellor, was but a creature of the latter; and to hope for justice in the event of trial was absurd. Bourbon was, therefore, driven to look abroad for a refuge or for vengeance. The emperor's emissary was at hand, proffering him that prince's sister in marriage, and many advantages, if he would join the emperor's party, and raise a civil war in France against its monarch. Bourbon hesitated long, but finally acceded to the proposals of Charles. Francis in the meantime had been roused from the lap of pleasure by the league of all Europe against him. He was at Lyons, on the way to Italy at the head of an army, when Bourbon was about to take the fatal step. Francis tried to soothe him: he showed his confidence by appointing him lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and assured him that whatever might be the result of this unfortunate process, he would not see him despoiled. The object of Francis seems to have been the gratification of his mother, and the driving of Bourbon to a marriage with her. This failed, however, like every act of the monarch's policy. The constable determined to join the emperor. But Francis was now near, accompanied with forces; and as circumstances had awakened his suspicions, he called on the constable to accompany him to Italy. Bourbon feigned sickness, and took to his couch, as a pretext for delay; till at length, seeing that it would be dangerous to trifle any longer with the impatient Francis, the constable dispersed his suite and fled, followed by a single attendant, into the dominions of the emperor. Francis gained by this desertion, as he confiscated the wide domains of Bourbon. Charles acquired what he least wanted — a general, and an unfortunate claimant.



CONSTABLE DE BOURBON

A Disastrous Campaign in Italy: The Battle of Pavia

Bonnivet, the personal enemy of Bourbon, was now intrusted with the command of the French army. He marched without opposition into the Milanese, and might have taken the capital had he pushed on to its gates. Having by irresolution lost it, he retreated to winter quarters behind the Ticino. The operations of the English in Picardy, of the imperials in Champagne, and of the Spaniards near the Pyrenees, were equally insignificant. The spring of 1524 brought on an action, if the attack of one point

can be called such, which proved decisive for the time. Bonnivet advanced rashly beyond the Ticino. The imperials, commanded by four able generals, Lannoy, Pescara, Bourbon, and Sforza, succeeded in almost cutting off his retreat. They at the same time refused Bonnivet's offer to engage. They hoped to weaken him by famine. The Swiss first murmured against the distress occasioned by want of precaution. They deserted across the river; and Bonnivet, thus abandoned, was obliged to make a precipitate and perilous retreat. A bridge was hastily flung across the Sesia, near Romagnano; and Bonnivet, with his best knights and gendarmerie, undertook to defend the passage of the rest of the army. The imperials, led on by Bourbon, made a furious attack. Bonnivet was wounded, and he gave his place to Bayard, who, never intrusted with a high command, was always chosen for that of a forlorn hope. The brave Vandenesse was soon killed; and Bayard himself received a gunshot wound. The gallant chevalier, feeling his wound mortal, caused himself to be placed in a sitting posture beneath a tree, his face to the enemy, and his sword fixed in guise of a cross before him. The constable De Bourbon, who led the imperials, soon came up to the dying Bayard, and expressed his compassion. "Weep not for me," said the chevalier, "but for thyself. I die in performing my duty; thou art betraying thine."

Francis, in the meantime, alarmed by the invasion, had assembled an army. He burned to employ it, and avenge the late affront. He marched upon Milan, whose population was spiritless and broken by the plague, and took it without resistance. It was then mooted whether Lodi or Pavia should be besieged. The latter, imprudently, as it is said, was preferred. The siege of Pavia was formed about the middle of October. Antonio de Leyva, an experienced officer, supported by veteran troops, commanded in the town. By the month of January, 1525, the French had made no progress; and the impatient Francis despatched a considerable portion of his army for the invasion of Naples, hearing that the country was drained of troops. This was a gross blunder, which Pescara observing, he forbore to send any force to oppose the expedition. He knew that the fate of Italy would be decided before Pavia.[i]

During the night of the 23rd of February the emperor's generals harassed the royal camp by a lively cannonade and a series of feigned attacks, while the main body of their troops was approaching in silence the walls of the park. Masons undermined and tore down a considerable portion of the wall, and through the breach thus effected the imperial advance-guard, under the young marquis del Guasto, cousin to Pescara, closely followed by the remaining troops, rushed into the park. In the light of the breaking day the French saw the imperial columns defile rapidly by the king's quarters and set out in the direction of Pavia. The hostile troops were obliged to cross a wide clearing that was raked by the shot of the artillery posted along the king's entrenchments, and so terrible was the fire opened out upon them by the veteran Galiot de Genouillac that, says Martin du Bellay,[j] "one after the other great breaches were made in the enemy's battalions, and there was nothing to be seen but flying arms and heads." Their ranks thinned by this frightful cannonade, the imperials began running in single file towards a valley, where they hoped to be out of range of the royal batteries.

When Francis I saw this movement he believed the enemy to be in full flight and his own victory assured; it had, moreover, been reported to him that the division under Alençon and Chabot had routed a Spanish battalion in the park and captured several cannon. Rallying his gendarmerie, he

rushed forth from the camp in pursuit of the flying enemy, thus masking his own batteries and reducing them to silence at the very moment when they might have been the most destructive; the remainder of the army followed the king.

Bourbon and Pescara, transported with joy, hastily formed their line of battle, while Del Guasto rushed up with his advance-guard, reinforced by Antonio de Leyva, and the flower of the garrison of Pavia, which the guard left in charge of the camp had been unable to hold back. The division of the duke of Alençon formed the left wing of the French army and was separated by a large body of Swiss troops from the king, who commanded the centre; between the king and the right wing commanded by La Palisse were placed four or five thousand lansquenets, the remnant of the old bands of Gelderland and Westphalia who were used to fighting under French banners against the house of Austria, and to being placed under the ban of the empire by Charles V. The shock of the meeting between these two armies, inconsiderable as to numbers but composed of the bravest fighting-men in Europe, was terrific. Fallen upon by the lansquenets of Charles de Bourbon and left without assistance by the Swiss, the king's lansquenets were overwhelmed by force of numbers and crushed between two battalions of the enemy. Nearly all these brave men perished, as did also their two chiefs, the duke of Suffolk (the White Rose) and Francis de Lorraine, brother of the duke de Lorraine and of Count Claude de Guise. Bourbon and his victorious infantry next turned against the French right wing which was engaged in a hot contest with a Spanish-Italian cavalry corps. The right wing, after many great but useless exploits, shared the fate that befell the French lansquenets, and it was on this field that the veteran Chabannes de la Palisse ended his glorious career. His horse having been killed under him, he was about to surrender his sword to the Neapolitan captain Castaldo, when a Spaniard, envious of Castaldo's good fortune, killed the illustrious prisoner by a shot from his arquebuse.

No less furiously did the combat rage in the centre where the king, at the head of his gendarmerie, overpowered an Italian squadron under the command of the marquis de Saint Angelo, a descendant of the great Scanderbeg; it is said that the king slew this nobleman, as well as several other knights, with his own hand. The squadron of the Franc-Comtois suffered overthrow in its turn; the Spanish cavalry would have had a similar fate had not Pescara devised a manœuvre which was as successful as it was terrible in its effects. This was to mingle with his horsemen fifteen hundred or two thousand Basque musketeers whose agility enabled them to slip into the ranks of the French to choose their victims, and who by their deadly fire checked the advance of the gendarmerie and threw all the squadrons into confusion. The richest coats of mail, the most gallantly plumed helmets were the marks selected in preference by these sharpshooters, and one after the other the famous leaders who had raised French arms to glory during the last thirty years were seen to fall — Louis de la Trémouille, Louis d'Ars, teacher and friend of Bayard, the grand equerry San Severino, the bastard of Savoy, and the marshal De Foix-Lescun, all were killed or mortally wounded. The king and those immediately about him continued to fight desperately, a furious charge having brought Pescara to the earth and put to flight Lannoy. Victory might still have been on the side of the French had Alençon and the Swiss done their full duty; but the duke, on learning of the confusion into which the right wing had been thrown, fled precipitately, carrying with him almost all the gendarmerie and the left wing, while

[1525 A.D.]

the Swiss, left uncovered by the desertion of Alençon and menaced on their left flank by the imperial cavalry, turned their backs in their turn, instead of repulsing the enemy's attack and flying to the succour of the king, and set out in confusion on the road to Milan. This battle should have served as a terrible lesson to the kings of France, who were in the habit of buying the services of mercenaries at a high price rather than place arms in the hands of their own subjects.

All the stress and burden of the battle now fell upon the king and the valiant body of nobles who pressed about him; Bourbon, Castaldo, Del Guasto, De Leyva, and the viceroy Lannoy had successively joined Pescara, and there remained to the French gendarmerie but to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Diesbach, the Swiss general, and Admiral Bonnivet decided not to survive — the one, the ignominious retreat which was to tarnish the fame of the league, and the other the sad "misadventure" for which he himself had been mainly responsible. They both flung themselves upon the pikes of Bourbon's lansquenets and at once found death. Bonnivet, the favourite of Madame d'Angoulême as well as of the king, had taken the most active part in the persecution of the constable, and Bourbon was now seeking him all over the field of battle. When he finally perceived his enemy's mutilated corpse, "Unhappy man!" he exclaimed with sadness, "you are the cause of France's ruin and my own!"

The French gendarmerie at last succumbed to the superior numbers of the enemy; they were broken, dispersed, and cut to pieces. Francis I, wounded in the leg and in the face, defended himself bravely for some time longer, but his horse, on being dealt a fatal blow, fell and bore him to the earth, where he would have been despatched by the soldiers who struggled to reach him had not Pompérant, the companion of the constable's flight, recognised the king and rushed to his rescue. Pompérant proposed to the king to pledge his faith to Bourbon, but Francis indignantly refused; then Pompérant sent for Lannoy, viceroy of Naples, who bent his knee to receive the bloody sword of the king, and proffered his in exchange.

Eight thousand French and auxiliaries had met death; and all the leaders — the king of Navarre (Henry d'Albret), the count of Saint-Pol, Fleuranges, Montmorency, Brion — who were not stretched upon the battlefield, shared the captivity of Francis I. The king begged his captors not to take him back to Pavia where he would be a "spectacle and a laughing-stock to those upon whom he had formerly inflicted fear, evil, and fatigue." He was conducted to the tent of the marquis del Guasto, where his wounds were properly attended to. In the evening Charles de Bourbon presented himself with every mark of respect before the monarch upon whom he had taken so cruel a vengeance. Both, according to the accounts most worthy of credence, displayed great self-control and admirably concealed feelings, of triumph on the one hand, of grief and humiliation on the other; the king's only departure from this reserve was in the reception he gave Pescara, which was warm compared to his attitude towards Bourbon. Francis I had at least one consolation in his misfortune, the one that would most appeal to a nature such as his: the imperial soldiers had been so struck by his prowess in the field that they divided his effects as relics among themselves, and evinced so strongly their desire to see him that the viceroy of Naples experienced some alarm. The German mercenaries, without taking into account the immense booty they had gained, demanded more imperatively than before the battle their arrears of pay, and Lannoy feared that they would seek to seize the king as surety, perhaps even go over to the royal side. He averted this danger by

sending Francis I to Pizzighettone under the guard of a Spanish captain of whose fidelity he was sure, and by extorting heavy contributions from the pope and the smaller Italian states, in order that the soldiery might be induced to wait in patience.

It was in the imperial camp near Pavia, on the eve of departure for Pizzighettone that Francis I wrote to his mother the celebrated letter that tradition has greatly altered by giving it this laconic form: "Madame, all is lost save honour." The true text is as follows: "Madame, To let you know the full extent of my misfortune I have but to say, of all things there remain to me only honour and my life; and that this news may be of a little comfort to you in your adversity I have prayed them to let me write you this letter, which prayer they have readily accorded; I also beg of you to allow yourself to come to no harm but to make use of your accustomed prudence, for I have hope that in the end God will not abandon me. I recommend to you my children and your grandchildren, and pray you to let pass the bearer of this to Spain and back, for it is his mission to see the emperor to inform him of the treatment I receive."[k]

Francis Captive in Spain: The Treaty of Madrid

Although Francis had hoped to overcome his conqueror, he did not fear to humiliate himself before him. This role of captive and suppliant was so new to him that he rather overdid it and rather bore in mind his present fortunes, which might change, than his kingly dignity which he should never lose. Thus, in three letters written by him to Charles, three times he affected to call himself his slave.

"Having no other comfort in my misfortune than the hope of your goodness, by which, if it please you, use me, the fruits of your own victory, with all fairness. I have firm hope that your virtue will not constrain me to do anything dishonouring, and I beg you to let your heart decide what you will do with me. Wherefore may it please you to have the kindly pity to assure the safety which is due the king of France as prisoner, then will you render me friendly and not despairing, you will make an acquisition instead of a useless prisoner, and have a king forever your slave. So I end my humble petitions which have no other end to expect but that you will style me, instead of a prisoner, your good brother and friend Francis."

But when Francis heard the rigorous conditions, when he saw he had in vain humiliated himself before his enemy, death appeared less horrible than captivity for him, and ruin and shame for France. "Tell your master," he cried, "that I would rather die than submit to his terms. My kingdom is still intact, and for my deliverance I neither can nor will harm it. If the emperor desires treaties, let him speak another language." The opportunity was propitious for Lannoy, and he well knew how to use it. "Your majesty," said he, "had made a better bargain with the emperor by treating directly with him. Go yourself to Spain and put yourself in the hands of my master. He will be touched by this proof of confidence and will certainly not abuse the rights victory has given him." Francis allowed himself to be taken in the trap, and judging his enemy by himself the chivalrous monarch resolved to put himself at the discretion of Charles V. He had sent from Marseilles six of his galleys to aid in the transport of troops which were to serve him as escort, and forbade his admirals to alarm the imperial crews during the crossing. He embarked at Genoa May 7th, 1526, and Lannoy was clever enough to persuade Bourbon and Pescara that he was conducting his prisoner to Naples.

[1525–1526 A.D.]

Charles V was unaware of Lannoy's project; it was a pleasant surprise, then, to learn that the king of France, whom he had thought in Italy, was on Spanish soil. He immediately had him transferred to his castle at Madrid, leaving it himself for fear of meeting him. Francis, always liable to be deceived, had counted on prompt deliverance. While waiting, he had imagined himself treated by his conquerors as a guest and not as a prisoner. But seeing he had been tricked by Lannoy, guessing the astuteness of Charles behind that of his minister, he immediately fell ill of grief. Soon his life was in danger. The people of Madrid, moved with sympathy for this knightly king, more fitted than Charles V to reign over Spain, hastened in crowds to the churches to ask God to cure him. Charles, who calculated everything, even his pity, realised that if he allowed his prisoner to die he would lose a possible ransom. He then decided to pay him a visit, and, lavish of fine words, succeeded in raising Francis' courage. But his object gained and the sick man saved, Charles forgot all his promises, refused to see his prisoner again, and reinsisted on the hard terms of release.[1]

France in the meantime, though stunned and disordered by the first news of the disaster of Pavia, was recovering its composure and force. The duchess of Angoulême was regent; the count de Vendôme, cousin of the constable De Bourbon, did not take advantage of his being first prince of the blood to embroil the kingdom. The parliament, indeed, displeased with the imperious character of the king, and angered on account of the Concordat and other causes, gave the regent some trouble. But new allies flocked to France in her distress. The Italian states were all ready to combine against the emperor, whose power they now dreaded. Henry VIII of England instantly flung his support into the scale of the discomfited Francis, and concluded a treaty with the regent, stipulating that the kingdom should on no account be dismembered. Large numbers of the people of Alsace had taken advantage of the opportunity to rise and invade France, excited by that religious zeal which scorns restraint. The count of Guise mustered some forces, fell upon them in time, and cut them to pieces. It was for this service that Francis afterwards created the county of Guise into a duchy-peerage — an honour heretofore granted solely to princes of the blood. The parliament made great opposition to this novelty; but the king was resolute in his friendship, and Guise became one of the high noblesse of France, a duke and peer.

Negotiations for the liberation of the king proceeded, with little prospect of success, at Madrid. Bourbon had betaken himself thither; his presence and his claims were no small source of difficulties. The emperor had promised him his sister Leonora, queen-dowager of Portugal, in marriage; but as Francis, to disappoint Bourbon, offered to marry this princess himself, the constable was obliged to forego the honour. The marquis Pescara dying at this time, the emperor offered the command of his Italian armies to Bourbon, who was urged to accept of it, and was thus got rid of. Still the terms offered to Francis were so harsh that he could not accede to them. His sister, the duchess of Alençon, had come to tend him in his illness and captivity. She was now about to return; and Francis put into her hand his absolute resignation of the kingdom, that he might be considered as dead, and no further efforts be made for his liberation. This alarmed the emperor, who became willing to relax in some degree. Still his demands were so exorbitant and unreasonable that Francis at length consented to extricate himself by a breach of faith, and to swear to a treaty the stipulations of which he was determined not to perform.

With these opposite views — grasping severity, that over-reached itself, on the one side, and premeditated bad faith, the almost compulsory resource of Francis, on the other — the Treaty of Madrid was concluded. By it the king agreed to give up Burgundy, to renounce all right to Milan and Naples, as well as to Flanders and Artois. He was to be set at liberty, and to espouse Leonora of Portugal, the emperor's sister. He was, moreover, to abandon his allies, the king of Navarre, the dukes of Gelderland, of Würtemberg, and the count de la Mark; and he was to re-establish Bourbon in all his property and privileges. Moreover, the two sons of Francis were to remain as hostages for the performance of these conditions, the king himself promising to return into captivity if they were not fulfilled. On the 14th of January, 1526, the treaty was signed; Francis taking the precaution to protest secretly, in presence of his chancellor, against the validity of such exactions. Charles himself could not but mistrust the sincerity of Francis, and he even retained him prisoner a month after the signature. The king's health again declined in consequence; and at length Charles, in a hurried and irresolute way, gave orders for his final liberation. He was led to the river Bidassoa, which separates the countries: his sons, who appeared on the opposite bank, were exchanged for him, and Francis, mounting a horse of extreme swiftness, galloped without drawing rein to St. Jean de Luz, and thence to Bayonne.

Further Dissensions and the "Ladies' Peace"

Thus freed from captivity, on terms which, if fulfilled, must ruin his kingdom, and if unfulfilled must stain his honour, Francis, it might have been expected, would be instantly occupied in the duty of defending himself and retrieving his affairs. His first act on arriving at Bordeaux, however, was to become enamoured of Mademoiselle d'Heilly, better known as the duchess d'Etampes, who superseded the countess of Châteaubriant in his affections, and held thenceforward the greatest influence over the monarch.

The liberation of Francis was the signal for a general league against the emperor. The Italian powers were ever disposed to unite against the strongest. Sforza had already rebelled against Charles, and had been driven from Milan by Pescara. All of them — the pope, the Venetians, the Florentines — now formed an alliance with the king, on condition that Sforza should remain in possession of Milan. A treaty to this effect was signed at Cognac, but was kept secret for some time. The states of Burgundy had assembled, to protest against the transfer of their province to the emperor. The king, they said, had no right nor power to make such a stipulation without their consent. When Lannoy, on the part of Charles, demanded the cession of Burgundy, Francis referred him to the answer of the states. The emperor, on learning this evasion of the treaty, called on Francis, as a man of honour, to redeem his word and return into captivity.

This was a trying moment for Francis, who piqued himself on possessing all the chivalric virtues. He could not openly deride the credulity of Charles, as Louis the XI or Ferdinand the Catholic would have done. He was perplexed, distressed, and could only allege the necessity of the case: a plea which by no means satisfied his nice notions of honour. He therefore resolved on taking the advice of his subjects. Despotic as he was, he felt in this case at least the necessity of having the nation to participate his responsibility. To call together the states-general of the kingdom was obviously the natural step in such a case. But no; Francis dreaded the very

name of that assembly, in which the vulgar *tiers état*, or people, had a voice. The legists and judges of the parliament had for some time taken upon them to represent the nation, in demurring to taxes and to edicts. Francis, and his minister Duprat, though not wholly contented with the parliament, yet deemed that preferable to an assembly of bourgeois. It was resolved therefore between them that the voice of the nation should now be taken, not in the good old states-general, but in what has since been called an assembly of notables — one of the most unfortunate inventions or innovations that despotic craft could have imagined.

This assembly of notables, or, as some historians will call it, this bed of justice, was held in December, 1526. It consisted of prelates, nobles, courtiers, gentlemen, the parliament of Paris, and the presidents of the provincial parliaments; the only admixture of democracy being the provost of merchants and the four sheriffs of the city of Paris. Before those Francis made a long discourse; entering at large into the affairs of the kingdom, its finances and resources. He recounted the misfortunes of his captivity, and declared his readiness to return to it, if his people thought that either their interest or his honour so demanded. The reply of each class, for all answered separately, was that he was absolved from an unjust and compulsory oath, against which he had previously protested, and the fulfilment of which the privileges and welfare of his people alike forbade. They at the same time accorded to him the liberty of raising two millions for the ransom of his sons, assuming in this particular all the rights of the states-general. Thus satisfied, Francis published the general league against the emperor, denominated "holy," because the pope was at its head. Not only the Italian states, but the Swiss and the king of England acceded to it; so that the reverses of Francis, if they had stripped him of territories, rendered him much stronger in alliances than his rival.

The emperor, on his side, promised to Bourbon the investiture of the Milanese, if he succeeded in expelling Sforza. This the constable accomplished, subsisting his mercenary troops on the unfortunate inhabitants of Milan — for of money Charles had as notorious a lack as his grandsire Maximilian. Milan taken, pillaged, and wasted, how was Bourbon to support his army — that army by which he lived? For since his exile the prince had inhabited camps, and was averse to any more orderly way of life. He loved his soldiers, rapacious and licentious as they were; and was beloved by them, as a valiant and successful leader inclined to tolerate the license of the freebooter. Since his treason, Bourbon had met everywhere with insults and ingratitude from the French, the Spaniards, the emperor, and his brother generals. This situation made him misanthropic, and his character degenerated into that of the reckless and ferocious corsair. To obtain plunder for his army of lansquenets, in lieu of pay, became indispensable; and he accordingly led them south, menacing all the great cities of the peninsula, and uncertain which he should attack. Florence and Rome had both declared against the emperor; Bourbon fixed upon the imperial city as the more glorious prey, and accordingly marched thither his mercenary army. Pope Clement was terrified at his approach, and used all his country's artifices to avert the danger. It approached nevertheless, and Clement shut himself up in the castle of St. Angelo.

The army of Bourbon attacked Rome in the morning of the 5th of May, 1527. Bourbon himself applied the first scaling-ladder, and was in the act of mounting it, when the first shot from the walls struck him and put an end to his disastrous career. His army passed over his body to the assault, and

Rome was carried by storm. The pillage was general, so merciless were the soldiery. Not all the ravages of Hun and Goth surpassed those of the army of the first prince in Christendom. The cruelty of the German soldiers was unequalled: they indulged in the most horrid extravagance of debauch and impiety. For two months they remained masters of the city; and the pontiff himself was finally obliged to surrender himself a prisoner.

This new triumph of the emperor, over the head of the church too, roused the zeal of Henry VIII. He already meditated a divorce from Catherine, Charles' aunt; and it therefore became his policy to befriend and protect the pope, whose assistance he would chiefly require, against the emperor. Wolsey was therefore despatched to France; the treaty between the crowns was renewed; and a joint army was raised, to march into Italy under the command of Lautrec. That general now compensated for his former ill success. He made himself master of Genoa by the aid of Andrea Doria; and took Pavia by assault, abandoning it to pillage, in revenge for the defeat which the French had suffered under its walls. The conquest of Milan would have been easy; but as that city was now to belong to Sforza, the French general turned from it towards Rome, in order to procure the liberation of the pope. His approach effected this: the emperor became less harsh in his terms, and Clement soon found himself free at Orvieto.

It was about this time, towards the commencement of 1528, that challenges and defiances passed between Charles and Francis. The former, in his reply to the French envoy, reproached the restored king with an infamous breach of faith; and hinted that he was ready to support his charge as a true knight, sword in hand. Francis, indignant, sent a reply that the emperor "lied in his throat"; and demanded a rendezvous, or *champ clos*, for the duel; but notwithstanding the choler of both parties, it never took place. It is singular that in this affair of the single combat the cold and politic Charles seems to have been most in earnest, whilst the obstacles and delays were raised by the headlong and chivalric Francis.

Lautrec in the meantime advanced to the conquest of Naples. He marched to the eastern coast, and soon reduced the provinces bordering on the Adriatic. The command of Bourbon's army had devolved on Philibert, the last prince of Orange of the house of Châlons, another French chief of talents and influence, whom the petulance of Francis had alienated from him and driven into exile. With some difficulty this prince withdrew his army from the spoils of Rome to the defence of Naples. He was not strong enough to face Lautrec in the field: the prince of Orange, therefore, and Moncada, the new viceroy, shut themselves up in Naples, where they were soon besieged by Lautrec. Andrea Doria, a faithful partisan of France, held the sea with his Genoese galleys, and blockaded the port. It was proposed to reduce the town by famine. After some time Moncada, fitting out all the galleys in port, made an attack on the Genoese, then commanded by Filippino Doria, Andrea's nephew. The attempt failed: the Spaniards were beaten, Moncada slain, and most of the captains taken; amongst others, the marquis del Guasto, and two brothers Colonna. Naples thus became in prospect an easy prey to Lautrec. Its fall might have brought the final submission of the kingdom; but the same blunder which Francis persevered in committing throughout his whole reign lost him this advantage, among so many others.

Such was the fatal habit of the French king to disgust and alienate his best and most attached friends. Doria, for example, like Trivulzio, was an Italian who united with a love of his own country a firm attachment to the French. His exertions had but just torn Genoa from the emperor to give it

to Francis: he was now doing the very same by Naples, when it pleased the French court to insult and disoblige him. The prisoners he had won in action were taken from him, and no allowance was made for their ransom. These insults to himself Doria might have passed over; of wrongs offered to his country he was more sensible. The French undertook to fortify Savona, and to raise it into a rival of Genoa. They removed thither the trade in salt, one of the most lucrative sources of the Genoese commerce. Doria expostulated; and another admiral, Barbescenas, was sent to supersede him and bring him prisoner to France. When the admiral arrived, Doria received him, saying, "I know what brings you hither: the French vessels I deliver to you; the Genoese remain under my command. Do the rest of your errand if you dare!" The consequence of this blindness and ingratitude on the part of Francis was soon seen; Genoa declared herself free, and allied herself with the emperor. The blockade of Naples by sea was raised; and the influx of fresh troops and provisions enabled the city to defy its besiegers. These, encamped under a midsummer sun, ill supplied, and harassed, were soon attacked by pestilence. Lautrec their general died of it. The marquis of Saluzzo, who succeeded him, raised the siege and retired to Aversa, where he soon after surrendered to the prince of Orange; and thus another unsuccessful Italian expedition was added to the long list of French disasters.

Another army led by the count of Saint-Pol into the north of Italy met with as little success. Francis felt that he could not re-establish his fortunes: he sickened of the love of glory that had hitherto animated him, and showed himself willing to treat for peace on any terms, provided the cession of Burgundy was not insisted on. Charles by this time saw that the nation would never consent to such a sacrifice: he therefore waived this part of the Treaty of Madrid. The negotiations on both sides were carried on by the duchess d'Angoulême and Margaret of Austria. The king gave up all his claims to possessions in Italy, Milan, Naples, and even Asti, and abandoned all his allies in that country; he renounced all right of sovereignty over Flanders or Artois; he ceded Tournay and Arras; two millions were to be paid as ransom for the young princes; the lands of the house of Bourbon were to be restored to the heirs of that family (a stipulation, by the by, never performed); and, finally, the treaty was to be sealed by the marriage of Francis with Leonora, the emperor's sister. This Peace of Cambray, called also the "Ladies' Peace," was concluded in August, 1529: it was as glorious for Charles as it was disgraceful to France and her monarch. The emperor remained supreme master of Italy; the pope submitted, and obtained the re-establishment of the Medici in Florence, with hereditary power; the Venetians, who said that Cambray was destined to be their purgatory, were shorn of their conquests. Charles forgave Sforza, and left him the duchy of Milan. Henry VIII reaped nothing save the emperor's enmity by his interference: the English monarch showed himself generous to Francis, by remitting to him, at this moment, a large debt. Thus was Europe pacified for the time.[1]

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

The melancholy Peace of Cambray will not be of long duration; the wars of Italy are not wholly finished; Francis I has not sincerely renounced "his heritage" beyond the mountains, the theatre of his former glory; he will continue to meditate and more than once to attempt, with some partial success, to shake his rival's dominion over Italy. But neither great expeditions nor great events in the heart of the peninsula will again be seen under his

reign. The essential interest of the history of France is no longer there: it returns to the interior; it is in the moral, intellectual, and social condition of that nation — thrown back upon itself after having failed in conquest, and confronted at home and abroad by the problem, growing daily more formidable, of a religious revolution or reaction which will compromise its destiny for centuries. The question is no longer whether France will snatch Italy from the political domination of Spain united with the empire, but whether France will find, in the elements which the Renaissance has brought her, the strength and light necessary to maintain or redeem her political and religious independence between those two genii of the north and south, Teutonic Protestantism and Hispano-Roman Papism[1] which, coming into collision, are about to make an attempt to drag everyone into their whirl.

We will not here enter on the religious history, whose crisis does not appear in all its intensity till some years after the Treaty of Cambray. We will first take a glance at the economical situation of France, at the industrial arts and particularly at the fine arts, at letters and science, at that Renaissance movement which continued to develop under the patronage of Francis I. The taste for a civilisation elegant and learned, picturesque and varied, was the sole affection to which Francis always remained faithful. He had a more genuine right to the title of "father of letters" (*père des lettres*) than to that of "knightly king" (*roi chevalier*). Even his own mistakes and the misfortunes of the allies he had abandoned were made to contribute to the progress of the arts among the French, a progress whose advance in a good direction remains, indeed, questionable. The fall of Florence, the persecutions of the partisans of France at Naples and in Lombardy, sent a multitude of emigrants, the flower of the Italian population, streaming across the Alps; and France, as she was so often obliged to do, at least opened an asylum to the friends she had not managed to protect. The king endeavoured to palliate the wrong he had done Italy by favours to Italians, and the exiles experienced some consolation in finding on the banks of the Seine and the Loire the tastes, fashions, habits of thought, and almost the language of their own country.

Many refugees were pensioned or invested with distinguished posts in the army and in diplomacy. The Florentine Strozzi and the Neapolitan Caraccioli, prince of Melfi, became marshals of France. Italy not only sent France artists and politicians, but merchants and skilful manufacturers, who brought into her cities their industry and the remains of their fortunes which had escaped the hands of the tyrants. The pre-eminence of the manufactures of Lyons dates from the fall of Florence: Louis XI had made Lyons a great commercial city and an international entrepôt by instituting three annual fairs which caused the decline of those of Geneva, and had endeavoured by the aid of Italian workmen to develop the manufacture of silk goods, simultaneously at Lyons and Tours: still Lyons, where various manufactures had rapidly developed, did not begin to rival Tours in silks until about 1525; the Florentine refugees soon gave her the superiority; two Genoese are also mentioned amongst the chief founders of the manufactures of Lyons.

A bank was instituted at Lyons. An import duty of two gold crowns per piece on velvet or silk goods protected the French silk manufactures against foreign competition; as to the cloths and woollen goods of Spain and Perpignan, they were absolutely prohibited in favour of the cloths of Languedoc. In

[1 "I purposely make use of this Protestant term," says Martin, himself a Catholic, "as expressing a particular form of Catholicism."]

the north the manufacture of the cloths of Darnétal near Rouen was very considerable; the edict of May, 1542, which regulated the manufacture at Darnétal, qualifies it as almost inestimable. An edict of the 18th of July, 1540, had decreed that foreign stuffs in gold, silver, and silk should enter France by Susa if they came from Italy, by Narbonne or Bayonne if they came from Spain: they were to be taken straight to Lyons and, there only, unpacked and exposed for sale. This privilege must have enormously increased the prosperity of Lyons. Yet in 1543 one of those sumptuary edicts which the rigid spirit of the parliament from time to time wrung from the kings forbade the wearing of gold and silver stuffs. French merchandises were subjected to a uniform export duty of one sou per livre. In 1540 a royal ordinance attempted to establish a uniform measure as already planned by Louis XI: an ell of three feet, seven inches, eight lines was prescribed for use throughout the kingdom. But commercial relations were not yet sufficiently active for the advantage of such an improvement to be generally felt; local practice protested and prevailed: the edict was revoked in 1543.

The French navy was making remarkable progress: Dieppe had raised its head since the expulsion of the English and had resumed its ancient preponderance amongst the French ports on the ocean; Norman and Breton navigators gleaned, so to speak, on the tracks of the Spaniards and Portuguese and tried to take up the threads of their old commercial relations with Africa, and to open new ones with both Indies. Such expeditions were full of peril, for the haughty rulers of the western and eastern seas treated as pirates those competitors who ventured into their domains. Captain Denis of Honfleur had touched at Brazil as early as 1504, before the Portuguese, who discovered it in 1500, had founded any settlement there; the French navigators continued to traffic with the savage tribes who sold them those precious woods from which Brazil has derived its name, and who "gave a better welcome to the French than to the Portuguese and other European peoples." In 1529 two ships from Dieppe, under the command of Jean Parmentier, made a voyage to Madagascar and Sumatra. During this time attempts which had more lasting results were directed to the north of America, towards the countries whither the Spaniards had not turned their steps. In 1506 Denis of Honfleur had visited the island of Newfoundland which was then taken for a portion of the continent; in 1508 Aubert, a native of Dieppe, followed him there with a vessel fitted out by Jean Ango, the father of the illustrious shipowner of the same name; the Bretons for their part discovered and named the island of Cape Breton, and the annual codfishery was founded on those coasts. The French government at last decided to second private enterprise, and to claim its share of the New World. In 1524, by order of Francis I, the Florentine Verazzano undertook a voyage of discovery, reconnoitred all the coasts from Cape Breton and Acadia to Florida, and took possession of them in the name of Francis I. Ten years afterwards, in 1534, the Breton Jacques Cartier of St. Malo, commissioned by the king at the suggestion of Admiral Chabot de Brion, satisfied himself that Newfoundland was an island, penetrated into the vast gulf which that great island bars, and reconnoitred the mouth of the St. Lawrence: the year following he ascended this immense river as far as the spot where Quebec was afterwards built, and discovered Canada. The name of New France (*Nouvelle-France*) was imposed on the whole northern part of America.

In 1540 Roberval, a Picard *gentilhomme*, was appointed viceroy of Canada by Francis I, and set out with a squadron of five ships which Cartier commanded under his orders; the colony was installed at Cape Breton. The

severity of the climate, so different from the magnificent regions conquered by the Spaniards, the insufficiency of supplies, the improvidence and negligence of the royal government were the cause of the failure at the close of a few years of this first attempt at colonisation, which was not renewed till the reign of Henry IV; but the sailors of Normandy, Brittany, and La Rochelle continued the codfishery and the fur trade with the peoples of Canada. A wealthy shipowner of Dieppe, Jean Ango, whom the documents of the time describe as "merchant of Rouen and viscount de Dieppe," made himself one of the glories of the French nation by his great enterprises, by his taste for the arts, and the energy with which he sustained the honour of the French flag against the rulers of the seas, particularly the Portuguese. His beautiful manor of Warengeville, farm-house rather than château, still charms the traveller amongst the green woodlands of the Dieppe coast. This family of Ango was probably the same whence came the architect Roger Ango who built the Palais de Justice at Rouen.

The French Renaissance

Whilst industry and navigation were thus progressing, the arts surrounded Francis I with a splendour which Charles V and Henry VIII in vain attempted to rival: for example, the king and all the nobles contended with one another in erecting buildings, and there sprang from the earth all those Renaissance châteaux which arose on French soil to take the place of the feudal fortresses, and which like them have unfortunately in great part disappeared. There was Madrid, the elegant retreat of the Bois de Boulogne, so called because Francis loved to recall the weariness of the prison in the midst of pleasures and liberty; there was La Meute (by corruption La Muette), and St. Germain, and Villers-Cotterets and Chantilly and Follembrai and Nantouillet, the splendid residence of Duprat. The national architecture, threatened by the growing invasion of the Italian taste, seemed to concentrate all its forces to protest against it by a last creation of brilliant originality (1526). He who has not seen Chambord does not suspect all the fantastic poetry that was to be found in the French art of the sixteenth century. There is something indescribable in this palace of the fairies, rising suddenly before the eyes of the traveller from the depths of the gloomy woods of La Sologne with its forests of turrets, spires, aërial campaniles, the beautiful tints of their pearl gray stones, chequered with black mosaics standing out on the sombre slates of the great roofs. This impression could only be surpassed by the spectacle which delights us on the terraces of the keep at the foot of the charming cupola which terminates the grand staircase, the centre and pivot of this vast and varied whole and which stands up radiant above the terraces like a flower one hundred feet high. Everywhere between the *lacs d'amours* and crowned F's, mysterious salamanders, vomiting flames, climb on the pediments, curl round the medallions, or hang from the cornices and panels of the vaults, like the dragons which watch over the enchanted castles of old legend, waiting the return of the master who will come no more.[k]

Francis I had at first been the pupil of the Italian, Baldassare Castiglione, author of a book called *Il Cortegiano*, or "the perfect courtier." Struck by the qualities of the Italian people, the French monarch cherished for them a peculiar love, and drew about him the most celebrated men of the peninsula. Leonardo da Vinci died at Fontainebleau almost in the arms of the king. Primaticcio, Il Rosso, Andrea del Sarto, and Benvenuto Cellini came with alacrity at his call, and some of their greatest works were des-

tined to be the property of France. The early and most illustrious French artists, among them Jean Goujon, were trained in the school formed by these masters, and it was to the construction and embellishment of Chambord and Fontainebleau that the king devoted their inspired brushes and chisels.

The type of the old fortress-castle of feudal times gradually gave place to another and less repellent one, that of the great pleasure-mansions which included among their attractions everything that the most luxurious and refined taste could devise. The court journeyed without ceasing from castle to castle and from feast to feast, eliciting loud complaints from the foreign ambassadors, who, though unable to afford the expense of such continual moving about, were yet obliged to follow.

Not satisfied with the presence of foreign artists about him, Francis I offered great inducements to men of science to visit his court. Erasmus, the literary oracle of Europe, was warmly solicited to leave Holland and establish himself in France, but he consented merely to make the voyage thither. Many Italians, however, among whom was the poet Alamanni, and a number of Greeks with the aged Lascaris at their head, established for themselves a second fatherland in France. The famous Guillaume Budé, guardian of the king's library and one of the most learned men of the century, was, with the Estiennes, deputed by the king to show these colonists all the honours of the land. Francis I gave his envoys to Turkey the mission of procuring for him manuscripts in Greek, and the translation into French of ancient documents was undertaken; while the art of printing, introduced in France during the reign of Louis XI, underwent rapid development; the presses of Lyons, where a numerous Italian colony had become established, gaining a celebrity for the town almost rivalling that of Venice or Bâle.

The College of France, called in the beginning College of the Three Tongues, was founded in 1529 after a plan indicated by Budé, less with the object of giving general instruction than for the purpose of promoting the study of the three languages of learning, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The institution bore a great resemblance to the Italian academies. Philology, its chief object, was the science most in vogue at that time, as it was held to be the initiatory stage in the study of antiquity. Thus conceived, the College of France left all instruction, properly speaking, in the hands of the old Sorbonne, the ancient university. True to its old scholastic spirit, opposed to innovations, and attached to its ancient privileges which it now believed to be menaced, the Sorbonne entered upon a bitter war against the new institution; but the latter, strong in the royal favour and patronage, issued victorious from the conflict. The number of chairs was increased, to the study of languages was added that of science, particularly mathematics, and beginning with the very first years of its existence the College of France gained the reputation of being the most brilliant and complete of all the European institutes of learning.

The reason for the creation of this college and for its rapid success and growth may be found in the tendencies of an age that was rich in discoveries of all kinds. There are, in the history of the human mind, certain happy periods when the horizons of thought seem to become enlarged on all sides at once. A new field was opened to philological research, as the Middle Ages had had but little knowledge of Greek and less of Hebrew. A corresponding progress was also made in geography and the natural sciences by the study of climates and races hitherto unknown.

Always powerful over the entire country, the influence of the court increased under Francis I, and was no less beneficial to letters and society in

general than it was to the cause of learning. The king, beloved of his men-at-arms because he was the best knight in the kingdom; of artists and scientists because he so generously patronised and encouraged them, commended himself equally to courtiers, men of letters, and ladies because no one in his realm carried to such a point as he the love of the beautiful. Aided by his mother and sister and later by his daughter-in-law Catherine de' Medici, he made his court the most remarkable in Europe, not only for the luxury it displayed but for its wit and grace and a certain elegant not to say corrupt refinement of manners that was best exemplified in the foreign princess brought up under the eyes of Catherine, Mary Stuart.

Never had the French court counted so many members. Under Louis XII it had been composed of a few favourites, a definite number of officers, and a guard of a hundred nobles. Francis I increased in enormous proportion the number of court officers, which he intended to bestow on upstarts who could in this manner rise to nobility. The posts were mostly filled, however, by landless gentlemen of birth upon whom were also bestowed detached titles. Thus arose a company of marquises and dukes possessing neither marquisates nor duchies. These two innovations alone would have sufficed to make the court the point upon which converged all ambitions and hopes of fortune. Francis I desired that women should share the offices and dignities of the court, and should have a hierarchy of their own; he loved to shower upon them, as upon his nobles, the marks of his liberality. Two of his mistresses, Madame de Châteaubriant, sister of Lautrec and of Lescun; and afterwards Mademoiselle de Heilly, whom he made Duchess d'Étampes, reigned for a long time side by side with the king, and patronised artists as well as distributed remunerative posts.

Unfortunately one cannot have much to say about this court without speaking of its corruption, to which Francis I himself contributed by the changes he brought about and by his personal example. Destroying as they did the simplicity of former modes of living, the innovations introduced by him resulted in confusion to the rules and usages of the nobility, and fostered fawning and intrigues. His own many scandalous deeds as well as those that were with impunity committed around him, have heavily burdened his memory with the charge of violating the public morality.

It would, however, be most unjust to view the court of the Valois only through the biased medium of Brantôme's[p] chronicle of scandals, or the writings of contemporaneous Calvinists. As for these latter, they have neglected no means by which they could blacken the fame of the prince and personages who were the first to persecute their co-religionists; hence, on many points, their testimony is not to be believed. The letters of Venetian envoys, on the other hand, who were observers of great depth and keenness, reveal the warmest admiration for a court of which they, among all foreigners, were the quickest to feel the great seduction and charm. All the literature of this century, in fact, imaginative as well as historical, attests with striking force the elevated character of the influence exercised by the court of Francis I over public opinion.

Particularly prominent among the writers of that time are Marguerite de Valois[q] and Marot,[r] the king's valet, from whose works the fairest judgments may be formed concerning the tastes of the court—its gallantry, its love of wit and social pleasures, the esteem in which it held pure learning and the tolerance it accorded free thought. Severely as we may condemn certain of their works, they are nevertheless worthy to serve as models for sentiment, beauty of form, and light, poetic grace. To these two writers

compare Rabelais, the author of the people, the creator of that strange and inexplicable encyclopædia wherein, as the product of a great intellectual debauch, the whole sixteenth century passes by us in review, and you will be able to judge on which side lay delicacy and taste, in what degree the literature of the court was qualified to elevate and refine the literature of the people.*f* But, on the other hand, Rabelais[1] remains a classic in our own day, while these other writers are forgotten. Rabelais, indeed, is not merely the greatest writer of this time, but by common consent he is named as one of the three or four greatest humourists of any age or country.[a] His work is in itself sufficient proof that Francis I destroyed neither the liberty of his subjects nor their originality. Although more absolute than his predecessors, Francis always took account of public opinion and had the insight to distinguish, as Ranke[s] ingeniously puts it, enforced obedience from that which is rendered voluntarily.

Thus even in those personal memoirs wherein the individuality of the writer is most wholly revealed, it is to be observed that the tendency of the century was all toward expansion, in height as well as breadth. We note the origin, the preliminary flights of that freedom of thought and research that was later to soar so high. Apparent as are the excesses of the age, we must not judge it by its faults alone ; its very shortcomings raised controversies that served to form public opinion in a graver, sterner mould. More ado was made about the use or abuse of supreme power, which was for the first time subjected to control. The writer who passes the severest judgment on Francis I and his court is Gaspard de Saulx-Tavannes, the representative of the most radical of the independent nobility.*f*

A word must be said about another phase of intellectual development—that which found expression in the words and deeds of Luther and Calvin and their followers.[a] The new opinions early crept into France ; their first converts were men of letters. All the great French jurisconsults of that century, in secret or openly accepted the Reformation. A party at the court itself inclined towards it. Louise of Savoy appears not to have been opposed to it. Her daughter Marguerite, queen of Navarre, an independent genius and the author of mysteries and novels, openly professed the principles of the German reformers ; the duchess of Étampes, the king's mistress, made a point of protecting them. Lefèbre d'Étaples (Faber Stapulensis), and Louis Berquin, both men of learning known and esteemed by Francis, sustained these in their favour : the first had begun six years before Luther. Finally the favourite court poet, Clement Marot, abandoned his elegies and epigrams to translate the psalms of David, which the reformists of Paris sang about the Pré-aux-Clercs. At first Francis, far from being alarmed at these symptoms, would fain have attached to himself Erasmus of Rotterdam, the king of the learned and of the men of letters of the century, who was accused of having prepared the way for Luther by his attacks on the monks. But when the German peasants, following out the new doctrines to their socialistic consequences, would have overturned all authority, Francis I thought that the Reformation, which was a revolt against the pope, was in danger of leading politically to a revolt against the king ; and if he remained the interested friend of the German Protestants he had no wish to allow their doctrines to gain ground in his own states.

During the king's captivity two Lutherans had been burned in the capital. He had put a stop to these executions, but in 1528 a statue of the Virgin

[1 The work of Rabelais is discussed in Chapter XIV of the present volume.]

was mutilated at Paris. Francis declared that "if he knew one of his own members to be infected with this doctrine he would tear it away for fear lest the rest should be corrupted," and from that day he persecuted the innovators. Berquin, who refused to retract, was burned on the place de Grève (1529); at Vienne, at Séez, at Toulouse there were other executions. The necessity of propitiating the Protestants of Germany mitigated the persecution. Again in 1536 six unfortunates were sacrificed on different squares in Paris in presence of the court.[m]

WAR AGAIN BETWEEN FRANCIS I AND CHARLES V

But we must not pause for further details of this character;[1] we must return to the sweep of political events in France, and the renewed quarrels of Francis and his old enemy Charles V. A lasting peace between such rivals as Charles and Francis was not to be expected. Even if the latter could have confined himself to the pursuit of pleasure, to the internal regulation of his kingdom, and to the patronage of the arts, the spirit of Charles, ever restless in the cabinet, could not fail to have provoked him. At one time the emperor sent him a summons, requiring his aid against the Turks, and ending with the accusation that he had called Suleiman to invade Europe. Francis was now on the closest terms of alliance with Henry VIII, who was bent on divorcing the emperor's aunt. The French king used all his influence with the pope to procure the necessary license for Henry, but was still baffled by the influence of Charles. Clement VII was the potentate whose alliance was most warmly disputed by the rival sovereigns. And both assailed the pontiff on a pontiff's weak side, by the offer of aggrandisement to his family. Charles proposed that Clement's niece, Catherine de' Medici, should espouse Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan; by which means the Medici would necessarily be ever adverse to the claims of the French kings on Milan. Francis, in opposition, offered his second son, Henry, duke of Orleans, as a husband for Catherine; and Clement, elated by the honour of an alliance with the royal house of France, exulted at the proposal. The emperor, who knew the proud character of Francis, could not believe that he would sincerely permit his son to ally with such upstarts as the Medici; and this incredulity neutralised the exertions that he might otherwise have made to obstruct the match. It took place, however, in 1533, at Marseilles, where Clement and Francis met to honour the ceremonial, and to arrange the conditions of their future friendship. One of these, there is no doubt, was the vigorous prosecution and extirpation of heresy. Francis, however, reaped as usual little advantage from the negotiation. He failed to obtain for Henry VIII the dispensation required, and that impatient monarch broke with the church in consequence. Clement himself died in the year following, and was succeeded by Paul III of the house of Farnese.[i]

Francis I and Charles V vied with each other in seeking alliance with the church. Francis burned heretics in the great cities, and made adhesion to the new opinions a crime against the crown. Charles, on the other hand, led an expedition into Africa, and slaughtered the infidels in a new crusade (1535). Victorious over Barbarossa, the usurper of Tunis, and followed by the blessings of the thousands of Christian captives whom he had delivered from slavery, he made his way to Rome. There, in presence of the pope,

[1 For a study of the Reformation, see vol. XIII.]

[1535–1537 A.D.]

he stood forth and made his complaint against Francis. He declared his readiness to invest one of his sons with Milan, on such conditions of suzerainty and subjection as he should afterwards choose to name ; failing that, to meet his enemy foot to foot, on horseback, or in a boat, armed *cap-à-pie* or naked to their shirts; or, finally, to declare internecine war upon him, binding himself by an oath never to sheathe the sword till he had made him the poorest gentleman that ever lived. After this decent and courageous bravado, at which the pontiff must have been greatly amazed, the assembly broke up in most admired disorder, and the dogs of war were let loose. An invasion of France was resolved on, and Charles already counted his victory so secure that he distributed the estates of the French nobility among his favourites (1536). An army of Spaniards and Italians was to overrun Provence, and another of Flemings to break in on Picardy. Between the two, Francis was to be crushed.



A French Nobleman, Time of Francis I

Misfortunes crowded, not in single file but in battalions, upon the thoughtless but affectionate king. His eldest son Francis, the dauphin, died at this time [suddenly; there were suspicions, probably unfounded, of poisoning]. Defection deprived him of some of the strongest fortresses in Savoy; and the forces of his enemy were reported to be on the soil of France. Instantly the courageous Francis was roused from his grief and dejection. The territory in front of the Spaniards was made a desert; the cattle were driven away, the villages burned, and parties of resolute horsemen sent forth to harass them on the march. Charles expected that all would be risked on the arbitrament of one great engagement, and was foiled by the unexpected tactics. He marched without glory, for he saw no enemy; and without food, for every field was bare. Sickness came to aid; and, in frightful disorganisation, the starving hordes hurried across the Alps, slain and pillaged on their way by the angry peasantry, and perishing in the clefts of the rocks of hunger and fatigue. Thus fell the pride of the invader almost without a blow.

Francis took now the lofty part which hitherto had been played by his rival ; and at a bed of justice in the palace of the Louvre, summoned his rebellious vassal before his feudal court (1537), stripped him by solemn sentence of his tenures of Artois, Flanders, and Charolais, which always had been held of the French crown, and of which his renunciation at the Treaty of Madrid was null and of no effect, as having been obtained by violence and fraud. Beside him, on this great occasion, sat the king of Navarre and James V of Scotland, who had just married the short-lived Madeleine of France — a more dignified, though not a more useful demonstration than the quarrel-scene of his rival at Rome. The forms of feudalism were occasionally revived to gratify a hatred, as the forms of chivalry were retained

to justify a duel; but the hatred of the two greatest sovereigns in Europe carried them beyond the bounds both of feudalism and chivalry. Their language, by their respective heralds, would have done honour to two English prize-fighters. They interchanged the names of perjurer and liar, and reminded each other of the discomfitures they had sustained; Charles being particularly caustic on the subject of Pavia and the prison of Madrid, and Francis retorting with reminiscences of the emperor's overthrow in Provence, and starvation among the hills. Yet, in a year after this time, the enemies met, and spent four of the happiest days of their lives in unrestrained intimacy at Aigues Mortes, a small seaport on the Mediterranean. Charles arrived in a galley. Francis went on board, and grasping his hand said, "My brother, you see I am your prisoner again." Charles returned the visit on shore; listened well-pleased to the open unsuspecting talk of his companion, and put down all his sayings, and plans, and recollections in his memory, to be used against him at the proper time. He promised him great things in return for all his confidence; the investiture of Milan for his son, and aid in all his schemes.

A French king at that time would have sacrificed anything for the vain-glory of establishing himself in Italy. Charles saw his triumph, confirmed it by a friendly visit to Paris, and made use of it by obtaining permission to pass through France to punish the men of Ghent who had rebelled (1539). And, when thus the whole advantages of his superior policy were secured, he denounced his friend to the indignation of every Christian, as an ally of Suleiman the chief of the unbelievers, and bestowed the duchy of Milan on his own son, Philip, the prince of Spain. Five armies sprang up at the king's lifting his hand, to revenge this wrong and insult. But though indignation may raise troops, it cannot raise money. Fresh burdens were imposed; church ornaments were coined into crowns, but still the chest was empty. La Rochelle set the dangerous example of rebellion on account of its over-taxation, and was only quelled by alleviation of its payments and pardon of its behaviour. Assistance was greedily looked to by both parties. Suleiman, the champion of Mohammedanism, on the side of Francis, was balanced by Henry, the defender of the Protestant faith, on the side of Charles. The Turks, under the same Barbarossa whom Charles had displaced from Tunis, besieged Nice, and ravaged the shores of Catalonia. Henry did little but keep Scotland from aiding France by the intrigues and menaces with which he sued for the hand of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, now queen, for his son Edward. A great victory at Cerisoles, in 1544, added another useless wreath to the chaplet of French achievements, and for a moment Milan opened its gates. But Charles and Henry were by this time on the soil of France. The Spaniards were at St. Dizier, the English at Boulogne. Troops were summoned from Italy, and collected from all quarters. Charles steadily advanced, seized Épernay, and rested in Château-Thierry. Paris almost heard the thunder of his guns; and, flushed with the possession of Boulogne, Henry was reported to be upon the march to join the army.

But other sounds reached the ears of the belligerents. The Protestants in Germany were sharpening their swords, and Charles feared the men of the confession of Augsburg more than the Catholic French. A peace was patched up at Crespy in the Valois (1544) which left things as they were, and enabled the two monarchs to turn their religious minds to the extirpation of heresy. The royal heretic [Henry VIII] who had been the faithful ally of one of them, and the considerate foe of the other, contented himself with demanding a bribe of 2,000,000 crowns for the restitution of his

conquests. From this time Francis and Charles had more interests in common. Both glowed with a hatred of the Reformation such as only tyrants can feel. They persuaded the pope to summon a general council to extirpate Lutheranism and Calvinism at once, and while the famous council of Trent was gathering from all the orthodox nationalities, they occupied themselves in cruel persecutions of their suspected subjects (1545).[v]

LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF FRANCIS I

Francis, however, was growing feeble. He was no longer the brilliant knight of Marignano or Pavia, the friend of Leonardo da Vinci and of Erasmus. Worn out before his time by excesses, at fifty-one he was a morose old man. The greatest blot on his reign belongs to these last unhappy years. So long as the war with Charles V continued, Francis I was careful not to offend the dissenters; the Edict of Coucy had even ordered, in 1535, the suspension of all persecution on account of religion. The peace concluded, men of harsh and sinister counsel, such as Montmorency and Cardinal de Tournon, resumed the upper hand. They attributed the king's reverses to the relaxation of severity and he allowed himself to be persuaded to order new executions. At Meaux fourteen pyres were erected in one day (1546); at the place Maubert Étienne Dolet was hanged and then burned.

The most odious execution was that of a whole inoffensive population, the Vaudois, whose beliefs were more than three centuries old. In 1540 they had been condemned as heretics. The execution of the sentence had been suspended in favour of a peaceable peasantry who paid their taxes regularly and merely offered the spectacle of pure and simple manners in the two little towns of Mérindol and Cabrières and in some thirty villages of the Alps of Provence.

But in the month of April, 1545, precise and rigorous orders from the court reached the parliament of Aix. Without warning, the baron de la Garde, assisted by the president D'Oppède and the *avocat-général* Guérin and accompanied by soldiers, entered the territory of these unfortunate people: 3,000 were massacred or burned in their dwellings; 660 sent to the galleys; the rest dispersed in the woods and mountains, where the greater part died of hunger and privation. For fifteen leagues round not a house, not a tree was left.

Francis I, who perhaps did not know all the details of this execrable drama, approved what had taken place and ordered the persecution to be continued. Foreign affairs went no better. It was the time when Charles V, no longer trammelled by the war with France and assured of peace with the Turks, turned his forces against the Protestants of Germany and, under pretext of stifling heresy, sought to stifle German liberty; the battle of Mühlberg seemed to lay the empire at his feet. Francis I did not see this great success of his rival; he had died three weeks before at the château of Rambouillet, at the age of fifty-two years (31st of March, 1547).[m] He was buried with a magnificence far surpassing anything which had yet been witnessed in France; eleven cardinals assisted at his obsequies, and the ceremony extended over two and twenty days. The bodies of his two sons, the dauphin Francis and Charles duke of Orleans, were conveyed to St. Denis together with his own, and Henry II succeeded to the vacant throne.[n] Before we take up the events of that monarch's reign, let us listen to an estimate of the character and influence of the showy ruler whose life story we have just followed to its close.[a]

GAILLARD'S ESTIMATE OF FRANCIS I

Charles V and Francis I (says Gaillard) perhaps owe it to each other that they were great men; each had some advantages that were denied the other. The leading characteristic of Charles was diplomacy, of Francis straightforwardness. If we compare the two princes as warriors, the sum total of their military exploits appears about equal; nevertheless the deeds of Francis are more famous. His early career was so brilliant that it has shed a lustre over his whole life, even over his misfortunes. To gain a victory at twenty makes a man famous forever. Charles V began his career, or at any rate distinguished himself in it, too late. His first important expedition was the one against the Turks in 1532; for the time when he appeared at Valenciennes only to fly on the approach of the king, and the occasion of his failure before Bayonne, when he was enabled to regain Fuenterrabia by the treachery of a coward, must count for nothing. The expedition to Tunis in 1536 was the first exploit of Charles V which can be compared with the battle of Marignano; nevertheless it was certainly better to gain the battle of Mühlberg than to lose that of Pavia. On the whole Charles V was perhaps the greater general and Francis I the better soldier, and this division of military talent is very much what might be expected from their individual characters, the one deliberate and thoughtful, the other ardent and impetuous.



THE BOUNDARIES OF FRANCE IN THE TIME OF FRANCIS I

In the matter of policy it cannot be denied that Charles V was much greater than Francis I. He kept or gained everything that was contested between him and his rival; he obtained the empire and took possession of the duchy of Milan, and he kept the kingdom of Naples. Nor did he owe his success entirely to the favour of blind fortune; it was rather the result of wise conduct, well-thought-out methods, and the adoption of measures likely to bring about the end he had in view. He was fortunate, and would have been thoroughly worthy of his good fortune had he not so often used fraudulent means to bring about success. He possessed in a high degree the royal faculty of understanding men. The greatest generals in Europe were to be found at the head of his armies; his ministers had no sway over him, and he always employed them in the matters for which they were most suitable. He understood both his own subjects and foreigners; he knew that Bourbon was a hero and that Saluzzo was only a traitor. He therefore made use of Bourbon for conquest and Saluzzo for treachery. Bourbon was a hero, but he was a French refugee, so Charles placed Pescara to act as a

spy over him. Pescara was almost on an equality with Bourbon and was jealous of him. Both men however were ambitious and not very faithful, so Charles employed the trustworthy and useful Lannoy to watch them both. He won over from France La Marck, Sickingen, the sublime Bourbon, the prince of Orange, and Andrea Doria, the greatest men of his time, while Francis only took from him the obscure prince of Melfi. Charles V greatly excelled his rival also in steadiness and energy.

Francis I was capable of actions which dazzle us, but he was only energetic by fits and starts, with long intervals of lethargy and languor; while with Charles V there were no such intervals. Always full of energy, he made his preparations, he carried them out, he plotted, he sowed dissension where it suited his purpose to do so, he went to Germany, to Italy, to Spain; he controlled the great powers and subdued the lesser ones, he fettered them all by his negotiations. Bayle remarks that since there were many more leagues formed against Francis I than against Charles V, the former must have been more feared than the latter; but it was the emperor's cleverness which made people believe that Francis I was so formidable. Moreover such leagues do not always prove that the power of the person against whom they are formed is greatly feared. After the defeat of the De Foix and the expulsion of the French in 1522, the whole of Italy formed a league against them; was it because she had more fear of Francis I, who was routed and expelled, than of the emperor, who was master of the Milanese and of the kingdom of Naples? No, but she thought she would be more likely to be left in peace if she submitted quietly to the emperor, than if she made an effort to help the fallen king to rise, by lending him a helping hand.

Henry VIII, it is true, more often allied himself with Charles V than with Francis I. He thought he had some claim to France; he knew he had none to Italy, to Germany, or to Spain. Charles V knew how to turn to his own advantage the power of his rival, which he exaggerated in order to injure him. But Francis I was far superior to his rival when he was defending Provence against his attacks, and Bayle is right in saying that he deserved more glory for preserving his own kingdom, in spite of circumstances, than Charles V, who failed to do this notwithstanding his great power and numerous intrigues, deserved for all his other conquests. Again, Francis was superior to Charles when he warned the latter that the people of Ghent were in rebellion, and allowed him to pass through France on his way to subdue them; when he pardoned the rebels of La Rochelle; when he behaved with such moderation after the scandalous scene in Rome; and when, Charles having calumniated him throughout Germany, he took no further vengeance than heaping benefits on the German merchants.

Finally, in military ability Francis I was at least the equal of Charles V; in political genius he was his inferior, but he surpassed him in honour: indeed his political inferiority was partly the result of a greater moral delicacy, which made him more fastidious than Charles as to the means by which he tried to gain his ends. In drawing this parallel we have been looking at Francis I as a politician and a soldier, but the point of view is not advantageous to him. He will perhaps shine more brightly in the history of literature and of art.[o]

CHARACTER AND POLICY OF HENRY II

Henry II, at the age of twenty-eight, displayed all the military qualities that had distinguished his father in his youth. He was trained in every kind of physical exercise, and enjoyed the reputation of being a most accom-

plished knight. "He possessed," says Brantôme,[p] "majesty and grace, and manners that were suavely royal. He loved war, and never found life so much to his liking as when he was in the midst of battle." His enterprising character had revealed itself in the last two struggles against Charles V, in which he had taken part under Montmorency and D'Annebaut. Cavalli, the Venetian envoy, who erred on the side of leniency, said of Henry that his excellent qualities gave promise to France of the worthiest monarch that had reigned there in two centuries. Like his father he made it a point to become acquainted with every gentleman in his realm. He detested Charles V, and took no pains to hide his feeling. The emperor well knew the bellicose humour of the king towards him and exerted every effort to furnish it satisfaction "Henry's father," wrote Charles V to his ambassador at Rome, "drew the Turk towards him by the hair of his head; Henry will seize him by hair, hands, and feet."

One thing, however, was wanting in the new king: though a poet, and possessing like all his race a cultivated taste in literature, he lacked that personal charm which made of Francis I the natural head of the most cultured court in Europe. The men of letters in general have little to say in his praise, and the Calvinists, whose numbers were constantly increasing and whom he persecuted with relentless rigour, have least of all been inclined to spare him.

COURT FAVOURITES

Scarcely had Henry II ascended the throne when he recalled Montmorency, the master who had instructed him in the art of war and who had beguiled the tedium of a recent period of disgrace by building the superb mansions of Écouen and Chantilly. Montmorency immediately became all-powerful, and showered upon his family the highest dignities and honours. Claude of Guise, his brother the cardinal De Lorraine, and his six sons, all destined to attain the highest eminence, were also given great prominence in the councils of the new reign; they literally blocked the approaches to the throne. "It seemed," says Tavannes, "as though the king had sworn to partition France among them." Diane de Poitiers, grand sénéschale of Normandy and mistress of Henry II, though many years his senior, wielded, under the title of duchess of Valentinois, an influence far wider and more powerful than that exerted by the duchess d'Étampes during the preceding reign. By the marriage of her daughter she became allied to the family of Guise, with whom all her future movements were made in concert. Lastly Saint-André, a former governor of the king, was elevated to the position of marshal, and the pope bestowed the cardinal's hat upon two favourite prelates, Charles de Bourbon, brother of the duke de Vendôme, and Charles de Lorraine, archbishop of Rheims.

D'Annebaut, to whom Henry attributed the defeat of Perpignan; the cardinal De Tournon, and several gentlemen who had served as secretaries of state under Francis I were banished from the court. Out of eleven cardinals who sat in the council seven were sent to Rome, partly with the intention of propitiating the new ministry, and partly to strengthen French influence with the government of Rome, and to establish a French party in the sacred college. The duchess d'Étampes was also requested to withdraw, the king even taking from her the diamonds she had received from Francis I to present them to the duchess of Valentinois.

These many changes resulted, as was inevitable, in widespread discontent. The new councillors were accused of rapacity, and the spirit of

[1547 A.D.]

jealous distrust in which they arrogated all the power to themselves highly incensed the people, while the king was reproached with the weakness which made him so readily yield himself over to be governed. The highest personages made open traffic of court dignities and positions; Montmorency in particular being accused of having furthered his own and his kinsmen's interests by bribes given to the highest nobles, and by peopling the courts of justice with magistrates and councillors of his own creation. Venality and corruption everywhere prevailed, and the spirit manifested by new ministers in entering upon their office was almost that of dogs rushing upon a quarry.

Not one of the writings, in which speaks prejudice or passion, that has come down to us from that day is unquestioningly to be believed; it is an unfortunate fact that many of our most entertaining historical memoirs are little better than chronicles of scandals, since, however incontestable may be the facts they contain, the manner in which these are dressed is invariably calculated to mislead.

On the other hand these memoirs enable us to form an excellent idea of the brilliancy of the court, of the intellectual standard of its members, of the political ability of the councillors surrounding Henry II, of the sentiments of honour and obedience by which were actuated the nobility. It is seen that to untrammelled liberty of opinion, whether in praise or blame, was allied a deep-seated reverence for law, for the government, and for the king. Indeed many diplomatic documents, which for a long time remained unknown, are to the honour of Montmorency, Diane de Poitiers, and the Guises, attesting a truth that contemporaneous writers of military memoirs seem scarcely to suspect — namely, that diplomacy can accomplish more than arms. From the additional circumstance that the records of the relations with Venice are mainly favourable to the court, it will be seen that, strange though it may appear, it was the Frenchmen of that day who contributed the most towards blackening the national character.

Catherine de' Medici, wife of Henry II, and Jeanne d'Albret, queen of Navarre, also played parts during this reign, small at first but increasing to great prominence as time went on. Catherine, whom Francis I had loved and protected against her enemies, gave as yet no evidence of personal ambition or greed for authority. She passively submitted to the rule of the duchess of Valentinois, but worked stealthily all the time to strengthen her own private influence — an influence which Diane herself finally came to second, and which paved the way to the reign upon which Catherine was soon to enter.*f*

RELIGIOUS PERSECUTIONS AND ROYAL MARRIAGES

The first days of his accession were employed by Henry in royal progresses through his domains, and in shows and spectacles. In the last of these he was himself a chief performer, and no one held the lists with a firmer lance, or overthrew his opponent with a more scientific thrust. Henry next proceeded to the slaughter of such of his people as began to think for themselves on religious subjects. Gibbets were erected on the side of the road by which he made his entrance into the good city of Paris, and unhappy Protestants were suspended from them by cords round their bodies, and dropped into a slow fire, which was kindled under them, till they expired. The Protestant princes of the league of Smalkald had been completely beaten at the great battle of Mühlberg within a month of Francis' death. The elector of Saxony

and the landgraf of Hesse were taken prisoners, their military followers dispersed, and to all human appearance the cause of the Reformation on the continent was at an end.

Before the fruits of the battle of Mühlberg could be gathered by the victors, news reached the confederated Protestants that a quarrel had broken out between the French king and the emperor, and between the emperor and the pope. They actually became the arbiters of these great dissensions, and were courted by all parties. Charles, in order to intimidate his holiness, insisted on the return of the general council to Trent, where it had been originally summoned in 1544, and its removal from Bologna, to which it had been transferred by Paul. This was to place it where the influence of Protestant belief was greatest, and already there were hopes of a compromise, by which Germany might become an undivided power. England was under an eclipse at this time, and was nearly forgotten outside of her guardian seas. Edward VI was on the throne, Somerset was protector, and both were too weak to do anything more than defend their authority against the cabals of the political and religious parties into which the nation was split.



HENRY II

The career was therefore open to the rival crowns. Charles, in entering on the new contest, showed his usual sagacity, and made concessions after having obtained all the advantages of force. He granted liberty of worship to the Protestants by an imperial rescript, marriage of their priests, and communion in both kinds, till the council of Trent should come to a final decision. But this was assuming too much of the pontifical authority to be pleasing to the pope. He protested against the Interim, as this act was called, and prosecuted his schemes in favour of France more zealously than ever. Persecution and toleration therefore became the conflicting arms of the champions in this great struggle; and it shows us how completely the political view at this time excluded the religious, that the heretics were slain and tortured by a man who was utterly regardless of the great question in dispute, while their liberties were defended by a gloomy and unrelenting bigot, who looked on them as the enemies of God and man.

Henry, too thoughtless to take warning by the sudden change in his adversary's treatment of the innovators, sought to strengthen his cause, and increase the papal influence, by double severity against the new faith. The massacres and atrocities perpetrated under Francis at Mérindol and Cabrières

rested for a long time in the memory of the people, till they were expelled by still wilder excesses of fanaticism and hatred. Rebellions, prompted by despair and over-taxation, broke out in several places, and an expedition into Italy was thwarted by the necessity of hurrying back to punish refractory Bordeaux. Disregarding the protest of the local parliament, the edict of the king had imposed a duty on salt, which maddened the consumers; for the article lay at their doors, and the commissaries were inquisitorial as well as unjust. Montmorency, the favourite, was in his element now. He was sent down to execute justice on the revolters, and spared neither sex nor age. A hundred of the chief artisans of Bordeaux were ignominiously hanged; crowns of red-hot iron were placed on other sufferers' heads while they were broken alive on the wheel. The bells were taken down, in sign of the withdrawal of the city's municipal powers; and a breach was made in the walls, in sign of its subjection to military law. Wherever the constable went, he was preceded by the executioners of his vengeance; and having spread desolation and misery through the whole south of the kingdom, he returned to Paris in time to take part in the rejoicings which had been going on while these terrible events occurred, for the marriage of Anthony de Bourbon with Jeanne d'Albret. The mother of this Jeanne was the Protestant and poetess, Marguerite of Navarre, the sister of Francis I; and the eldest son of this marriage was Henry IV. These blood-stained espousals were the connecting link between the follower of Bayard and the friend of Sully. It is a great step when we come, with only one life between, from the armed bravo of Marignano to the author of the Edict of Nantes.

At this time also another marriage was resolved on, and another royal bride made her appearance at the court of France. A beautiful and graceful child she was, whose life has been studied with more zeal, and fate lamented with more tears, than those of any other queen; for it was the fair and unfortunate Mary of Scotland, transplanted now, in her sixth year, from the bleak land which scarcely owned its allegiance, and always refused its affections — to appear for a brief moment on the brightest and gayest throne in Europe, and go back to the toils and struggles, the errors and sorrows of her native realm. She was betrothed in 1548 to Francis the dauphin, who later ascended the throne as Francis II. The rejoicings on these two auspicious events were soon interrupted; for all the nations were in a roused and unsettled state, and every day brought forth some new complication of parties, or totally unexpected turn in the progress of affairs.

A distinction seems always to have been drawn between the doctrines of the Lutherans and the Calvinists. The Lutherans were considered merely dissidents from the papal church, but the Calvinists were thought rebels against royal authority. Excesses on both sides justified to superficial observers the opinion, which inflamed the Catholics and reformers with unappeasable rage, that their joint existence was impossible. Catholicism, when it was triumphant, trampled on the faintest spirit of dissent; and dissent, when it had the opportunity, retorted with almost insane retribution. The release from the darkness in which all men's minds had been avowedly kept was too sudden to be wisely borne. The light blinded their eyes, and the persecutors could point to their victims' acts in justification of their own. This will account for the tragedies and nameless horrors of the next half century in France, in which the national character entirely changed. Jacques Bonhomme became a ravening savage instead of a complaining drudge, and knight and cavalier became brutalised below the standard of a Chinese mandarin or maddened Hindu.

WAR WITH CHARLES V AND HIS SUCCESSOR

National efforts, however they might ostensibly be only on temporal or political subjects, borrowed their spirit from these theological dissensions. Wars, sieges, marriages, all had reference to the great argument of the time; for it was felt on both sides that the preponderance of either of the parties in the religious struggle would decide the predominance of the political opinions which were supposed to be involved. Protestantism and free government, if not the cry, was already the sentiment of all the peoples, and Catholicism and loyalty to the crown were the counterblasts on the other side. If Charles V, therefore, at any time, perceived that the pope himself relaxed in his opposition to the Calvinist reformers, he opposed the person of his holiness without the least compunction, but with an unabated reverence for his office; and if Henry II saw, in the midst of his executions of the Protestants of his own kingdom, that encouragement of the Lutherans of Germany would weaken his rival's forces, he sent assistance to the confederated princes. But both were equally bent on maintaining their individual authority. It will therefore not surprise us when we perceive that, in the year 1552, the part played by these unprincipled potentates became reversed. Charles, the publisher of the Interim which secured the Protestant demands, is at open war with them in Germany; and Henry, the torturer of the reformers of his own kingdom, is armed in their defence. Maurice of Saxony, however, saved the French king the trouble of crossing the Rhine, for he secretly placed himself at the head of a band of determined Protestants, forced the passes of the Tyrol, and scattered the council of Trent, which was still carrying on its labours. Without check or pause they marched without beat of drum, and got so close to the house in Innsbruck where Charles was in bed with a slight illness, that his imperial majesty had to fly with no more dignified apparel than his shirt and stockings.

While the confederated princes were lamenting the escape of their expected prisoner, they were cheered with a message from the emperor himself offering terms of accommodation. The rapidity of his flight had been increased by the knowledge, which reached him in his retreat, that Henry, with a great French army, was on the borders of Germany, and ready to cross over to the assistance of his enemies. Better, he thought, to yield at once than allow his French rival to gain the glory of a reconciliation. The princes accepted the offer, and wrote to beg Henry to discontinue his advance. Henry yielded to their request by discontinuing his advance; but indemnified himself by turning to one side, and seized by main force the cities of Metz, Toul, and Verdun, spread his legions over Lorraine, and made an attempt on Strasburg and the county of Alsace. In this he was only repulsed by the Protestantism of the people. They feared the most Christian king and had more confidence in the Catholic emperor, who, to the great satisfaction and at the powerful request of sixty thousand armed Lutherans, had just signed his name to the Treaty of Passau. This Treaty of Passau was the termination for a long time of the German strife. Equal rights were secured by it to Protestant and papist; equal eligibility to seats in the great council of Speier, and mutual freedom of worship in the states of both communions.

The war henceforth became a petty personal quarrel between the sovereigns. Charles, having pacified the reformers, swore he would die before the walls of Metz, which the king had taken, before he would raise the siege; and Henry swore he would lose his last man before a Spaniard crossed the ditch.

[1552 A.D.]

It was a duel with the world gathered round the lists. Metz was a wretchedly placed town, with no regular fortifications, no bastions or towers, and was commanded by hills in the immediate neighbourhood. But Francis, duke of Guise, threw himself into the place, and made preparations for defence.[v]

The Siege of Metz (1552 A.D.)

On approaching the place, the 120,000 men who accompanied Charles V found neither food nor trees nor shelter in a province which the stupidity of the men of Brandenburg had ravaged without aim or profit, as completely as the defenders of Metz might have done systematically in their own interest. Albert, their markgraf, with the improvidence of a savage, had reduced himself to famine. Charles V remained for a long time encamped at Saarbrücken and at Forbach, waiting for his heavy artillery.

Guise had no intention of letting himself be surprised by this army, masked as it was behind the forests, and most frequently employed himself in visiting the guards and sentinels. He established a "watch" of mounted men at St. Julien, to give warning of the approach of the enemy. In the beginning of October, the imperial army came and encamped at St. Avold, and on the 19th Metz was invested. Under fire of the enemy's cannon, Guise continued the defensive works. Frequent sorties kept up the ardour and health of his garrison and exhausted the enemy by continual alarms and losses. Every day brought some damage to the enemy, taking soldiers and horses and spoiling the provisions that were being brought to them.

At the very beginning the emperor sent a trumpeter to Guise to announce that Hesdin had been taken from the king of France and that his brother, the duke d'Aumale, had fallen into the hands of the markgraf of Brandenburg. But Guise did not heed these communications; himself informed of what was passing outside, he was in constant communication with the king, and imparted to him every episode of the siege, his hopes, his checks, and the movements of the besieging army. His quarters were near the Champagne gate, the principal object of attack, that he might be at all hours on the spot where action and the greatest danger were making ready. He had about five thousand men under his orders in the town a few days before the investment, but he was entirely without artillery. He sent a letter to the king, through the enemy's lines, on the 29th of October: "Having already split and cracked four of the seven pieces of artillery I have had fired, am decided on careful consideration to load them only with half charges, and to use them to terrify more by their noise than their effect, and to employ falconets and other small pieces, it not having depended on me to give warning of what I needed in good time, when means to assist me were available." He had a double cannon on the Ste. Marie platform, but "one of the pins of the said piece is sticking out; the other large culverin is burst at the front end, about a foot and a half, and I have had it sawn off and shall still be able to use it. I assure you, sire, that the fault was not that they were overloaded, but they are so badly cast and of such brittle material that they cannot bear even the smallest charge."

Thus reduced to make use of his artillery only for noise, he still did not hesitate to announce that he could defend himself for ten months. Every two or three days he sent despatches to Fontainebleau or to the relieving army; he indicated means of supplying him with news and of seizing convoys. He wrote to his brother, the cardinal De Lorraine, to the constable, to the marshal De Saint-André; he excited everyone to an interest in the

honour of saving his town. The cardinal shared this passion with all the ardour of his vehement temperament. To relieve his brother, to save Metz, to hurry to the king at any moment to suggest an idea, propose a surprise of the besiegers, and — noteworthy solicitude which shows the party leader still hidden behind the courtier — commend to him those gentlemen whom his brother singled out for their gallant conduct in the sorties, name those who were wounded, demand for his partisans the offices of those who had just been killed, were the occupations of his every moment.

On the 20th of November, Charles V approached the ramparts of Metz, believing that in a few days they were to fall into his hands; but at this moment his engineers judged it necessary to change the point of attack. Whilst they opened new trenches in front of the Tour d'Enfer, not a day passed but some troops of French horse went to alarm the enemy and ransack the highways, where spoil was made of provisions and booty of prisoners. On the 28th of November the Tour d'Enfer fell with a crash. Guise wrote to the king that the breach was three hundred paces in width, but that he did not fear the assailants, for "St. Remy swears by all the gods he will make them a tasty dish. I think, sire, they will not be cold when they go out." The whole garrison awaited the assault with the same gaiety.



THE DUKE OF GUISE
(From an old French print)

The ensigns and standards were planted on the breach to defy the enemy and every morning on mounting guard new colours were seen to float. While filling the sacks of earth, the men-at-arms removed their cuirasses and worked clothed in their "woollen liveries." Bales of wool were rolled by women beside the sacks of earth in the space left empty where the rampart had fallen in. One evening Guise, between two of these bales, was watching the preparations for an attack, when the engineer, Camillo Marini, putting his head in the place whence Guise had just withdrawn his own, suddenly received a discharge from an arquebuse which scattered his brains.

[1552–1553 A.D.]

Only on the 7th of December did the assault seem imminent. Guise hurried to the breach with all his volunteers whom he encouraged "by many of those good words which incite to honour, to virtue, and to victory." The assault was not attempted, but the besieged had no time to rejoice at this, for the next day they learned that Henry II was on the march to besiege Hesdin, instead of advancing to the relief of Metz. It is true that they showed no appearance of desiring to be relieved, but they began to be sparing of provisions; Guise had the pack-horses of the foot-soldiers killed and salted, in order to husband the forage for his cavalry. The Tour de Wassieux fell in near the Champagne gate and left a new breach a hundred paces wide: this opening was closed up like the first, with sacks of earth; the sorties went on; sometimes two or three were made the same day, by different gates. The wounded in the place were numerous. For their benefit Guise sent for the surgeon Ambrose Paré, who had drawn the lance-head from his cheek when he was wounded before Boulogne, and an Italian officer of the imperial army consented for a hundred crowns to introduce him into Metz by night with "his apothecary and his drugs." The privations and sufferings which the emperor's army had to endure rendered treasons of this kind possible, especially amongst the Italians, bewildered as they were at finding themselves transported to the north in the middle of winter for the sake of a German quarrel. Whole bands of these Italians deserted from the camp of the besiegers and went to take service with Henry's army, detachments of which were overrunning Lorraine and intercepting all the convoys of provisions sent from Franche-Comté to the emperor.

The garrisons of Verdun and Toul intercepted food and reinforcements, which were arriving from other points for the besieging army, carried off the famished soldiers who wandered from the camp, and held enclosed in mud and snow this confused multitude of men of all nations. The imperial leaders were not in agreement. The duke of Alva would not allow his veteran Spanish soldiers to be sacrificed under the eyes of the Germans, who refused to advance for an assault. Charles V, exasperated at seeing such weak walls and crumbling ramparts resist so formidable an army, exclaimed: "How, by the wounds of God, is it that they do not enter? By the virtues of God, what is the meaning of it?" He grew irascible, ill, discouraged. He was heard to exclaim: "Ha, I renounce God; I see well that I have no men left; I must bid farewell to the empire, and shut myself up in some monastery, and, by God's death, in three years I will become a Franciscan!" Finally, beaten in several sorties, and embarrassed by the capture of his provisions, he opened a furious cannonade without attaining the foot of the wall, took to mining, in which he was not more fortunate, and withdrew shamed and desperate on the 26th of December, 1552, leaving his army orders to raise the siege after his departure and execute a retreat on Thionville and Treves, under cover of some cannon mounted at the château de Ladonchamp. He had lost thirty thousand men during the siege.

When, on the 2nd of January, 1553, Guise perceived the men in full retreat, he precipitated himself with his garrison into the camp, to seize the artillery and cut to pieces those who had lagged behind. But a heart-rending spectacle presented itself to the eyes of the French. Whichever way they looked, lay so many dead, and an infinity of sick were heard groaning in the huts. In every quarter were great cemeteries, newly dug, tents, arms, and other abandoned furniture. Some of the sick were lying in the mud, others were seated on great stones, with their legs frozen up to the knees in mire, so that they could not withdraw them. More than three

hundred were rescued from this horrible condition, but the greater number were obliged to have their legs cut off.

As if by magic, the French forgot their own sufferings, the dangers they had just escaped, the martial ardour which had animated them, and thought of nothing but how to succour these unfortunate Germans, thus abandoned with their feet in the snow, administering all necessaries and such comforts as poor sick foreigners want. Guise had them taken in boats to the duke of Alva at Thionville.[u]

Minor Engagements; the Abdication of Charles V

The following year the emperor besieged Thérouanne in Artois. The little garrison which held it did not capitulate till after a valiant defence; he had the town levelled with the ground and it was never rebuilt. Hesdin was treated in the same fashion. Charles was avenging his humiliated pride by a savage war. In 1554 Henry II paid him ravages for ravages in Hainault and Brabant; he sacked Mariembourg, Dinant, and, at the other extremity of the Low Countries, he attacked Renty, not far from St. Omer. The emperor tried to relieve the place, Guise and Tavannes defied his cavalry; but the French army was compelled by lack of provisions to raise the siege.

At the same time, Brissac, by a series of campaigns which have remained the model of their kind, maintained himself with a small army in Piedmont, in spite of the duke of Alva, and seized Casale, capital of Montferrat; Strozzi and Montluc defended Siena in Tuscany against the Florentines and imperialists; the Turks menaced Naples; finally the baron de la Garde, the French admiral in the Levant, sacked the island of Elba and set foot in Corsica. Thus the check given at Metz was not counterbalanced; France seemed to have recovered her youth with her new king: Charles V grew weary of a struggle which he had now sustained for five-and-thirty years. Frustrated alike by France and by the princes of Germany, he ceded the Low Countries, Italy, and Spain to his son Philip II, and sought at the monastery of San Yuste that repose which is never to be found by the ambitious great (1556).

Charles V had not been able to deliver all his crowns to his son; Austria and the title of emperor remained to his brother Ferdinand. The house of Austria was divided. But at the moment in which Philip II lost Germany he seemed to gain England by a second marriage with the queen of that country, Mary Tudor. He had already one son, Don Carlos; he reserved for him all the Spanish possessions, and it was agreed that the child who might be born of this new union should reign over both the Low Countries and England, that is to say, that London and Antwerp should be under the same master, the Thames and the Schelde under the same laws, and that the North Sea should become an English lake. Thus both for the present and the future France was seriously threatened by that domination which was pressing on her from three sides, which might bring upon her an English invasion against which she could no longer hope for aid from Germany. At the beginning of 1556 Henry II had signed the Truce of Vaucelles with Charles V: he broke it the same year (November), that he might not leave Philip II time to establish himself firmly. The holy see was then occupied by a fiery old man, Paul IV, who was alarmed to see the Spaniards beside and above him, at Naples and Milan. The king and the pontiff made alliance. An army under command of Montmorency was sent to the Low

[1557–1558 A.D.]

Countries; another under the duke of Guise into Italy. The object was to confine Philip II to Spain; Henry II was to enlarge his dominions on the north by neighbouring provinces which it would be easy to retain, and one of his sons received the promise of the crown of Naples, which Duke Francis of Guise, descended in the female line from the house of Anjou, counted on taking for himself. The plan was well thought out. The energetic Paul IV placed his spiritual power at the service of France and the Italian cause; he lanced an excommunication against the most Catholic king.

Battle and Defence of St. Quentin (August 10th, 1557)

Against Montmorency, Philip II opposed the duke of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert, who, despoiled of his states by Francis, rested all his hopes on Spain; and against Francis of Guise, the duke of Alva, a true Spaniard, devoted to the church more even than to his king. Guise, received in triumph at Rome by Paul IV, penetrated into the Abruzzi, but failed near Civitella before the scientific tactics of his adversary. Emmanuel Philibert, after a feigned attack on Champagne, suddenly turned on St. Quentin where he was joined by seven thousand English. This was a place without walls, without munitions, without provisions. Admiral Coligny threw himself into it with seven hundred men; Montmorency approached with supplies; but came so near to the enemy with an army very inferior in numbers and took so few precautions to preserve for himself freedom of movement, that he was obliged to fight without securing his rear. Emmanuel Philibert turned his flank, attacked him in front and rear, and completely defeated him. A Bourbon, the duke d'Enghien, and a viscount of Turrenne were slain; another Bourbon, the duke de Montpensier, and the constable De Montmorency, the marshal De Saint-André, the duke de Longueville were taken with four thousand men, the artillery, and the baggage. There were more than ten thousand killed or wounded.

"Is my son at Paris?" cried Charles V on learning in the depths of his retreat of San Yuste of this great disaster to France. Philip II was not at Paris and did not get there. Cold and methodical of temperament, and obstinate but without dash, he had not thought it prudent to follow up his victory. Before taking another step he wished to have St. Quentin, and St. Quentin did not allow itself to be taken for seventeen days. Coligny, knowing that the salvation of France was in question, had made heroic efforts to prolong the defence. There had been time to collect forces and Philip II, after having taken Ham and Le Catelet, re-entered the Low Countries with the slender results of a victory which had promised to be as disastrous to France as Poitiers or Agincourt.

The Retaking of Calais (1558 A.D.)

Henry II had recalled the duke of Guise in all haste from Italy. The conqueror of Metz left the duke of Alva to impose, one knee on the ground, the Spanish will on the pope, and came to receive the title of lieutenant of the kingdom with unlimited power. All the nobility flocked round him; Guise responded to the universal expectation. Whilst a movement of the troops was attracting the attention of the enemy on the side of Luxemburg the duke hastened to Calais which he immediately invested on the 1st of January, 1558. The English, reckoning on the fortifications of the place and on the marshes which envelop it, had left in it but nine hundred men

Two forts cover the town : that of Nieullay on the land side and that of Rysbank on the side of the sea. Guise attacked the first with fury and carried it on the 3rd of January. The fort of Rysbank fell into his power the same day. On the 6th the castle was attacked ; on the 8th the garrison capitulated. The last and shameful memorial of the Hundred Years' War was thus effaced ; the English no longer possessed an inch of territory in France. In an attempt to compensate themselves by an attack on Brest they were unsuccessful, for the troops landed at Le Conquet were driven back into the sea by the peasants of lower Brittany. This was the death-blow of Queen Mary. "If they open my heart," she said when she was dying, "they will read upon it the name of Calais." The same blow ended the Anglo-Spanish alliance. Elizabeth, who succeeded her sister Mary on the English throne, made Protestantism triumphant in the island and became the irreconcilable enemy of the king of Spain.

The Treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis (1559 A.D.)

Indeed Philip II, that sombre and fanatical spirit, desired to attain the dominion of Europe by another road than his father's. Half of Germany and the Scandinavian states had separated themselves from Rome, and the Reformation, stifled in Italy and Spain, was fermenting in France, spreading in the Netherlands, triumphing in Scotland and England. Philip II conceived the design of crushing Protestantism. He wished to make himself the armed leader of Catholicism throughout Europe, the secular arm of the holy see, the executor of the sentences of the church. His faith and his ambition were in agreement ; for he doubtless calculated that if he stifled heresy it would not be to the profit of orthodox Christianity alone, but to that of his own power, and that the unity of religion would bring about the unity of the empire. In this idea a war with France for a few towns on the frontiers seemed at the moment impolitic and he desired to treat with its king in order to win him to his own plan. Before the peace was concluded some further encounters took place ; Guise seized Thionville and Therme, captured Dunkirk, Bergues, and Nieuwport, but suffered a defeat by allowing himself to be caught at Gravelines between the count of Egmont who attacked him in front, and an English fleet whose cannon belaboured his flanks. On the 3rd of April, 1559, peace was at last signed.

By this treaty France kept the Three Bishoprics (Metz, Toul, and Verdun with their territory). She had already re-entered into possession of Boulogne ; she also retained Calais, engaging to pay a sum of 500,000 crowns to the English if she had not restored that city at the end of eight years — which she took good care not to do. The two kings of France and Spain mutually restored each other their conquests on the frontiers of the Low Countries and in Italy, with the exception of Piedmont where Henry retained several towns [1] until the claims of Louise of Savoy, grandmother of the king of France, should be settled. The acquisitions of France were valuable and protected her against England and Germany. Nevertheless, one of the negotiators, Montmorency, has been accused of having sacrificed his country's interests to the desire of recovering his own liberty more quickly ; France ceded the county of Charolais, and 189 towns or castles, which she

[1] The treaty of 1562 with Savoy finally left France only Pinerolo, Perosa, and Savigliano, which were restored by Henry III in 1574. The marquisate of Saluzzo which Francis I had snatched from the family of that name was usurped by Savoy in 1588 and in 1601 exchanged for Bresse.

[1559 A.D.]

was occupying in the Low Countries or in Italy, in return for St. Quentin, Ham, Le Catelet and a few unimportant places which the Spaniards surrendered to her. "Sire," Guise and Brissac said bitterly, "you give in one day what would not be taken from you in thirty years of reverses." Some towns in Italy were neither necessary nor desirable for the French, for they would have served them as a perpetual temptation to return across the Alps. But they were abandoning French territories which should have been preserved at all costs, especially as the Spaniards did not restore Jeanne d'Albret the portion of her kingdom of Navarre which they had held for half a century.[m]

Thus the great game of international politics that for half a century had been played on the boards of Europe was brought to apparent termination, — and France had lost. Since the time of Charles VIII, France, as represented by its king, had longed for foreign conquests. We have seen Francis I in a life-long struggle with Charles V, striving vainly to give imperial influence to his kingly office. Henry II has kept up the game, with Philip II for his counter-player. But now, after all these struggles, all this loss of property and life, the bounds of France still remain almost the same as they were when Francis I came to the throne in 1515. The glamour of the deeds of Francis I may have given a certain added éclat to the French name; but the actual extra-territorial influence of France has shrunk rather than extended since the time when Charles VIII marched practically unopposed to the confines of Italy (1494).

On the other hand, the duchy of Bourbon has reverted to the crown, and the recovery of Calais is an event of real significance. With the expulsion of the English troops from this last coign of vantage, the work begun by Joan of Arc a century before is finished. If the imperial hopes of the French kings have been doomed to disappointment, at least France is now mistress of her own territory; hers is a compact and unified kingdom, if not an empire in the modern sense of the word.

THE LAST DAYS OF HENRY II

It is not to be supposed, however, that the French king regarded the imperial contest as really over. Doubtless Henry II, while momentarily turning his attention to the interior of his kingdom, dreamed of a future day when he should return to the imperial struggle. But if so, the dream was not to be realised. The end of his life was at hand. The same year that witnessed the signing of the treaty of Câteau-Cambrésis was to see Henry II pass finally from the scene; indeed there is nothing more to record of him except the manner of his death. This came about in a way characteristic of the times, but impossible in any other age; it was the accidental outgrowth of the festivities that marked in a sense the culminating features of the treaty.

It had been arranged that a double marriage of international significance should be effected. Henry's daughter was to marry the king of Spain; his sister to marry the duke of Savoy. Thus the great imperial drama was to close in the conventional way amidst the peal of wedding bells. The weddings took place; but the fates mocked at such an ending, and insisted that what had commenced as a tragedy should remain a tragedy to the end.[a] In scandalous contrast to the feverish agitation — an exaltation mingled with dread — that pervaded all France, the court had given itself over to pleasures and festivities: nothing but balls, masquerades, jousts, and banquets on the

occasion of the double marriage of the princesses of France. But the joyous sounds were soon to be changed to the silence of death. On the 20th of June, 1559, Madame Elizabeth of France, daughter of the king, was married at Notre Dame to the duke of Alva, proxy of the king of Spain. On the 27th the contract of the duke of Savoy and Madame Marguerite, the king's sister, was signed. Splendid lists were marked out, at the end of the rue St. Antoine, facing the royal palace des Tournelles, and almost at the foot of the Bastille where the deposed magistrates were imprisoned. During three days the princes and lords tilted there in presence of the ladies. On the 29th of June the champions (challengers) of the tournament were the dukes of Guise and Nemours, the son of the duke of Ferrara and the king in person, wearing the colours of his sexagenarian lady, the white and black of widows, which Diana had never left off. When the passage at arms was finished the king who had ridden in several races as "swift and expert rider" wished to break another lance before retiring, and in spite of the entreaties of the queen he ordered that the count de Montgomery should be his opponent.

Montgomery in vain tried to be excused. The two jousters rushed violently against each other and broke their lances with dexterity. But Montgomery, forgetting to throw away instantly the fragment remaining in his hand as the rule was, involuntarily struck the helmet of the king; penetrating the bars of his visor, and thrusting a splinter of wood into his eye. The king fell on the neck of his horse, which carried him to the end of the enclosure; here his equerries received him in their arms, and carried him to Tournelles amidst the greatest confusion and indescribable dismay. All the aids of science were ineffectual; the wood had penetrated into the brain. Vainly the renowned Vesale hastened from Brussels on the command of Philip II; Henry II languished eleven days, and expired on the 10th of July after having the marriage of his sister Marguerite with the duke of Savoy celebrated in his chamber the day before his death. He was a few months over forty years of age. All Protestant Europe hailed the arm of the Almighty in this thunderbolt which had struck down the persecuting king in the midst of his "impious" festivities.

The reformers were not mistaken. The race of Valois was doomed. Restored in the fifteenth century by the greatest marvel in French history, it had disregarded the will of God as indicated by Joan of Arc. In the sixteenth century it outraged humanity and hampered the natural development of France. Its days were numbered. Now replacing the fanaticism of Henry II by a policy devoid of principle or sincerity, it was to strive at random during thirty years against the tempests of the religious wars, to disappear finally in a sea of blood.[k]



CHAPTER XIII

CATHERINE DE' MEDICI AND THE RELIGIOUS WARS

[1559–1589 A.D.]

The lance-thrust with which Montgomery struck down Henry II in the tournament of June 29th, 1559, was to change the aspect of France. The reign so rudely interrupted in the midst of festivities had not always been happy or brilliant, but it had maintained an appearance of grandeur. The reigns of which it led the sorrowful series, could not bring it the same honour or the same profit. It was no longer the question as to who should have the first place in Europe, the house of France or that of Austria; but who in France would gain by the unchained religious passions — the Guises or the Bourbons. In future it is no longer a question of fighting the Spanish or the English; when they are mentioned, it will be to open the French frontiers to them and have them take part in the country's struggles. — DE LACOMBE.[b]

VOLTAIRE — struck with the violent contrast between the misery and brilliancy of this century, the sudden rise of the arts, the refinement and chivalry of the court which glittered even in the midst of crimes — cries out: "It is a robe of silk and gold stained with blood." The gold and silk have been shown; now appear the blood and ruin.

Henry II left to Catherine de' Medici four young sons. Sickly from birth, and already weakened by excess, three of them rapidly succeeded to the throne, having themselves no heirs; and thus for a quarter of a century the weight of absolute power, so difficult to carry, falls into the hands of children or young men without experience. Grandchildren of one of the most brilliant of monarchs, and with the blood of the Medici in their veins, they were able to show happy qualities of spirit and great defects. They were eloquent speakers, occasionally poets, and always friends of literature and art, but with vices that endangered the state; and the crimes which resulted from their characters, at once violent and perfidious, overshadowed their gifts of mind. The oldest, Francis II, was not able to show the sad effects of these contradictions in his nature; he reigned less than a year and a half.[c] His successor, Charles IX, a child of ten on his accession, reigned fourteen years, but never ruled, being dominated by the baleful influence of his mother. To Charles succeeded his weak and perfidious brother Henry III,

with whose troubled and ineffectual reign the house of Valois came to an end. Such are the reigning monarchs of our present epoch. But the real ruler of France during this dark period of thirty years is the mother of the kings, the scheming, pitiless Catherine de' Medici. It is her story that we tell as we follow the fortunes of her weakly offspring, the first of whom now claims attention.[a]

FRANCIS II (1559–1560 A.D.)

The law declared the king a major at thirteen years of age; at sixteen Francis II was still weak of will and under the tutelage of others. With a prince feeble both in mind and body at the head of the state, it was natural that the queen-mother should be called upon to take an active part in public affairs. The widow of Henry II had not as yet made her influence strongly felt; with all her superstition she was known to possess intelligence and a refined taste in art and in matters pertaining to her personal pleasures, but in moral sense she was notably deficient. Always kept by her husband in ignorance of public affairs, she had hitherto revealed no higher qualities than a rare constancy under affront and a marvellous ability to carry on intrigues. Now passing as she did without transition from court circles into state factions, and from minor intrigues into war, she was taken at a disadvantage and did not at once show herself equal to the requirements of her new rôle; without convictions of any kind as without scruples, she was not led to adopt the firm and open policy that would best have served the state, but carried all the artifices of the boudoir into the conduct of public affairs. Her method of government consisted in ruling men by their passions, a method which augments corruption by doubling the strength of the parties it places in opposition to each other. The many outrages which had been inflicted upon her by the triumphant Diane de Poitiers had effaced in her mind all distinction between good and evil, and there was left her but a single worthy sentiment, her affection for her children. All her efforts were directed toward keeping the power in the hands of her sons, and to fulfil this end she unhesitatingly made use of every means, from love intrigues to assassination. A policy so perverse must inevitably bring its own punishment, and the blood-stained crown of the Valois, falling from the hands of this unscrupulous Italian woman, came near to being irretrievably shattered.

The young Mary Stuart, wife of Francis II, superseded Catherine de' Medici in power for a brief period. Henry II had wedded his son to this daughter of James V and Marie de Lorraine in order to make sure of the aid of Scotland in any future quarrel with England. Beautiful, gracious, intelligent, and witty, Mary had not yet committed those faults which were to be expiated by a long term of suffering, that ended only in death. At the brilliant court of France, surrounded by the poets, scientists, and artists that attended her every step, Mary threw herself unrestrainedly into the pleasure of exerting those rare charms of mind and person which have silenced all adverse criticism on the lips of modern historians. The influence exercised by the young queen on all around her, the empire she had gained over the mind of the king, might have operated powerfully for the welfare of the state had she been surrounded by disinterested advisers; as it was she gave herself up completely to pleasure and left the management of affairs in the hands of her uncles, the cardinal De Lorraine, and Duke Francis of Guise.

The house of Guise, a younger branch of the ducal house of Lorraine, had, although but newly established in France, rapidly risen to power. Claude, chief of the house, had obtained in recompense for his services the governor-

ship of the province of Champagne and the elevation of his property of Guise into a duchy, his brother John being made a cardinal. Two of his sons were destined to play a prominent part in the affairs of France: the elder, Francis, had bravely defended Metz and reconquered Calais; while another, Charles, had succeeded his uncle John as cardinal and possessed as many as twelve ecclesiastical sees, among which were three archbishoprics. The young king left to the first-named, Francis, all matters pertaining to "the militia," while Charles was given jurisdiction in civil affairs. Thus the entire administration of the state was practically given into the hands of these two brothers, the "general superintendence" over the government which Catherine de' Medici was supposed to retain being only a high-sounding, empty title.

There were other candidates that aspired to power, some by reason of their birth and others from pure ambition — the Bourbons, for example, and the Montmorencys. The house of Bourbon had for chiefs at that time Anthony who married Jeanne d'Albret, heiress of the kingdom of Navarre, and his two brothers, Charles, Cardinal de Bourbon, and Louis, prince of Condé. These three were the nearest kindred to the Valois, and Anthony, in case of minority, could have laid claim to the regency; but since the treason committed by the constable, the Bourbons had been somewhat in disgrace, and for the time being were making no demands.

The aged and inflexible constable, De Montmorency, the chief who had met defeat at St. Quentin, showed himself less disinterested; but the king, pretexting his advanced years, gradually relieved him of the burden of affairs. Thus the two Guises remained undisputed masters of the power, the king, and the court, until a new enemy rose up to challenge their supremacy. It was forty years since Luther had begun to preach against the established church, and Europe was now divided into two communions.[c]

Religious Parties

In France the religious parties were political factors at the same time. The Huguenots, as they came to be called, were largely recruited from among the nobility which was hostile to the Guise party. This must be kept in mind as we enter upon the long story of crime and civil war which marks the religious settlement in France. It was particularly unfortunate that this great question of religious differences came at a time when a line of weak kings left authority the prize of faction or in the control of women.[a]

A conspiracy against royalty became the first act of Protestantism in France; and thus hundreds of loyal subjects and rational minds were alienated from it, and their dislike was strengthened by prejudice. The court, with some reason, henceforth declared against it an eternal war. Many of the noblesse had already joined the party of Coligny and of Condé, though the king of Navarre and the constable hesitated and held back. La Rochefoucauld, Jarnac, and the vidame de Chartres declared for them. An atrocious impertinence on the part of the cardinal De Lorraine, opportunely occurring, swelled this band of foes to the Guises. Tormented by demands, some for debts due and some for places promised, the all-powerful prelate in a fit of spleen published a proclamation by sound of trumpet, ordering all petitioners, of whatever rank, to quit Fontainebleau, where the court then was, without delay, and this under pain of being hanged. The cardinal, perhaps, meant to be facetious; for the court instantly became a desert. The host of noble suitors, proud though mendicant, could not forgive the threat, and many joined the discontented.

The party had numerous meetings in the château of Vendôme, and in other places. La Renaudie, a gentleman of Périgord, and an agent of Coligny, was employed by him to be the ostensible leader. A meeting was secretly convened at Nantes, where the Protestants and enemies of Guise united to the number of six hundred, and took counsel together. It was agreed to attack Blois, where the king then was, obtain possession of his person, and get rid of the odious Guises. Amongst such a host of conspirators secrecy was almost impossible: the duke received warning of the plot, and removed the court to the castle of Amboise. The cardinal De Lorraine was terrified; he proposed to summon the *ban* and *arrière-ban*, and gather an army against the rebels. All the anxiety of Guise, on the contrary, was that his enemies should show themselves; and for that purpose he affected confidence. Coligny and Condé both repaired to Amboise, where Guise received them without betraying the least mark of suspicion, and he appointed them to different posts of defence about the castle; each, however, watched by his own trusty partisans. The rising had been appointed for the 15th of March: it took place on the 16th, the baron de Castelnau seizing the castle of Noizé, not far from Amboise. La Renaudie was marching to join him: they hoped to surprise the court; when on a sudden the royal troops sent by Guise made their appearance, attacked La Renaudie, slew him, and besieged Noizé.

An amnesty was now published in the hope of allaying the insurrection; but, as if in contempt of it, the château of Amboise was attacked on that very night. All the vigilance and valour of Guise were required to repel the rebels. By secret information he had time to prepare for them, and they were routed. The amnesty was revoked, and no mercy was shown to the captives. Twelve hundred of them were hanged, or otherwise despatched; even Castelnau, who had surrendered on the faith of the duke de Nemours, was executed in the presence of the court. In the confessions forced from many by the torture, none of the real chiefs of the conspiracy was mentioned except the prince of Condé. History is even in doubt to decide if those chiefs were concerned in the attack: the Protestant party will not admit that they by this rash and unwarrantable act produced the civil war. Condé was brought to trial in presence of the court: he disdained to defend himself but as a knight. "Let my accuser appear," said he, regarding Guise, "and I will prove upon him, in single combat, that he is the traitor, not I, and that he is the true enemy of the king and of the monarchy." Guise rose to reply to this challenge: "I can no longer suffer these dark suspicions to weigh upon so valiant a prince; I myself will be his second in the combat against whoever accuses him." Most of those present were as perplexed as no doubt the reader is, to comprehend this conduct in the duke of Guise. Some called it chivalric generosity, others the perfection of guile.

In the trouble excited by the conspiracy, the young king, for the first time, manifested an opinion of his own. He was shocked at finding himself the object of hatred, and he began to mistrust the Guises. The queen-mother, Catherine, after the example of her son, also took courage; and the chancellor Olivier, as well as Vieilleville and other courtiers, joined her party. Hence arose the first amnesty—a concession on the part of the Guises which was recompensed by the duke's appointment as lieutenant-general of the kingdom. The executions which followed, especially that of Castelnau, which the court witnessed, shocked the princesses (the cardinal De Lorraine hoped that the sight of heretic blood would have had an opposite effect), and they, with the young queen Mary, flung themselves into the scale of mercy. Guise was unable to resist this influence; he saw that the prince of Condé

must in consequence be released, and he sought to take to himself full credit for a generosity that was forced upon him. Here then Catherine de' Medici, for the first time, appears as the leader of a party.

The continued mistrust and independence of the Guises shown on the part of the queen-mother and the young king produced an assembly of notables, summoned soon afterwards at Fontainebleau to take the affairs of the kingdom into consideration. In it the Protestant leaders, even prelates, spoke openly the apology for reformation; and Coligny demanded tolerance for the sectarians, relying upon the neutrality of the court. Guise could no longer command his temper, as he did at Amboise: mutual recrimination and menaces were heard in the assembly of peace. Both parties struggled in their discourses to convince the monarch of the justice and expediency of their counsels; but the weakness and indecision of the court were at the same time seen by both; and an appeal of equal earnestness was made by them to the people. The Protestants continually cried out for the states-general and a national council. And now the cardinal De Lorraine forgot his nature so far as to join in the cry, and make the same demand. The independent attitude of the queen rather forced the Guises to strengthen themselves by popularity.

Such appear the true reasons why the states-general were summoned to meet at Orleans, in October, 1560. Historians in general perceive in them merely a snare to catch the Protestant chiefs. They served that purpose indeed, but they had been already summoned ere Condé, just released, could have recommenced his intrigues. The arrogance and boldness of the Protestants, and of Coligny, in the assembly of notables at Fontainebleau, were revolting to Catherine and Francis. Between August, when that assembly was held, and October, the period for the assembling of the states, the Guises had completely won the court to themselves, and regained their influence. The prince of Condé attempted during that interval to seize Lyons, and convert it into a stronghold of rebellion. He failed, however; and his traitorous enterprise became thoroughly known at court. Notwithstanding this, the brothers of Bourbon, the king of Navarre and the prince, were induced to join the assembly of the states. Though full of mistrust, they still ventured on the secret favour or neutrality of Catherine, who joined in enticing them to come. They were ill received by the king. Catherine was troubled, and shed tears on beholding them, knowing them to be victims betrayed by their confidence in her. The king's mind had been filled with the bitterest calumnies against them: he accused Condé of having attempted his life, and ended by committing that prince to prison. The king of Navarre instantly complained, and expostulated with the queen-mother; but she could not now retract the consent she had given, or unbend the mind of the young monarch. Condé was tried by a commission, and refusing to answer, was condemned to death. The day was appointed for the execution, and Catherine de' Medici betrayed to all who approached the agony and misgivings of her mind.

Death of Francis II

Historians will maintain that this sensibility on the part of Catherine was affected; but it would seem that she was now sincere in wishing to save the life of Condé, and fortune placed this in her power. The young king was stricken with sudden illness, arising, it is supposed, from formation of an abscess in his head. The supreme authority rested with the queen-mother. The Guises urged her to execute the sentence upon Condé; but she hesitated,

and resolved to save him. She determined, however, to turn her mercy to advantage; summoning the king of Navarre, she offered to spare the life of his brother, provided he signed an agreement renouncing all claims to the regency in case of the young king's death. Navarre signed; and Francis II expired on the 5th of December, 1560.[d]

France would quickly have forgotten this unfortunate young man but for two ineffaceable memories which were connected with his reign — that of the rise to power of the Guises, together with the beginning of the terrible religious wars, and the far pleasanter one of the presence on the throne of the lovely Mary Stuart. Obliged, after the death of her husband, to leave the land of her adoption and return to her native Scotland, she wept long on sailing away from the shores that had witnessed "evil luck depart from her and good fortune take her by the hand." Leaning on the rail in the stern of the ship that was bearing her westward, she kept her brimming eyes fixed on the receding coast-line of the country she was leaving, and "remained in this attitude full five hours," says Brantôme,[e] "repeating unceasingly, 'Adieu, France! Adieu, France!'" When night came she caused rugs to be spread in the same place and laid herself down there to sleep, refusing all food. At daybreak she could still perceive a point of land on the horizon, and at the sight she cried out, "Adieu, dear France, I shall never see you again!" She was to find a crown, it is true, in the country towards which she was journeying, but there awaited her chains as well, an eighteen-year period of captivity, and instead of ascending a throne she mounted the steps of the scaffold.[c]

THE ACCESSION OF CHARLES IX (1560-1574 A.D.)

Charles IX, a boy ten years of age, succeeded his brother Francis. Catherine de' Medici, according to her promise, liberated the prince of Condé; and as the king of Navarre, according to his promise, supported the queen's pretensions, she took upon her the office of regent.[d]

The dangerous experiment of a meeting of the states-general was now unavoidable, and all parties paused to see what the result would be. The result was not so considerable as either side expected. The universal voice was for reform in the management of the state and diminution of taxation. Reform also in the church was strongly advocated; but the priests voted that it could only be procured by strengthening the laws against the Protestants; the third estate voted that the object was to be gained by freedom of conscience; and the nobles were almost equally divided in their votes. All, however, agreed in re-establishing the Pragmatic, and diminishing the contributions to the pope. After a session of six weeks the states-general was prorogued, and factions breathed again. Guise reconciled himself to his enemies, the constable and the marshal Saint-André; and the three put themselves under the protection of Philip of Spain in defence of the Catholic church. This gave them the name of the "triumvirate." Condé and Coligny, on the other hand, strengthened their relations with the Huguenots. They looked in all quarters for assistance, and the Protestant prospects were not so desperate abroad as to discourage their hopes at home. In Germany, indeed, the Huguenots were at that moment triumphant. Not more than one tenth of the people had retained their allegiance to the pope.

Catherine, the queen-mother, pretending an impartiality she did not feel, condescended to listen to a controversy carried on in her presence between the doctors of the contending faiths. She was struck with the ability of the Huguenot champions, whom she had considered hitherto as mere fanatical

enthusiasts, and the admiration of such an enemy is more dangerous than her contempt. From this time she brooded over plans for the extermination of a sect who could argue so well and fight so bravely, and in the meantime gave them some delusive privileges, which irritated their opponents and dissatisfied them. They were permitted to worship outside the walls of a town, but they must go to the meeting unarmed, and disperse when ordered to do so.

It chanced that Francis de Guise was travelling with a stout escort near the little town of Vassy, in Champagne, on a Sunday in the March of 1562. The Protestants were worshipping in and around a barn beside the road, and the gallant escort drew sword upon the unhappy congregation, slew sixty of them on the spot, and wounded almost all the rest. Guise, who had been struck by a stone upon the cheek, rode on and took no notice of the outrage committed by his guard.*f*



CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

CIVIL WAR (1562–1569 A.D.)

This was the signal for a war which, interrupted seven times by precarious treaties and as many times renewed, covered the land of France during a period of thirty-two years with blood and ruins. At the news of the massacre of Vassy the Huguenots everywhere took up arms; the duke of Guise seized the king's person in his castle of Fontainebleau and carried him, with his mother, to Paris where there were but few Protestants.

"As regards the efficient and assured force of the reformers," says Michel de Castelnau,*g* "it consisted of three hundred noblemen and as many soldiers accustomed to arms; besides four hundred volunteers, students and citizens, utterly without experience. What was this body, in face of the infinite number of the people, but a fly measuring forces with an elephant?" Outside of Paris, however, the Protestants thought they could count upon a tenth of the population, and the greater part of the provincial nobility was on their side.

They proclaimed Condé[1] defender of the king and protector of the realm; and at the end of a few weeks they had gained possession of two hundred towns, among which were Rouen, Lyons, Tours, Montpellier, Poitiers, Grenoble, Orleans, and Blois. The Guises had not expected such prompt action on the part of their antagonists. Though ill-prepared for war, they had the king in their hands, and strong in this advantage they declared the Calvinists guilty of rebellion and Condé of the crime of lèse-majesté; whereupon Philip II, the champion of Catholicism over all Europe, sent them a corps formed of members of those old Spanish bands that were as noted for their cold-

[1 Louis I of Bourbon, first prince of Condé (1530–1569), brother of Anthony, King of Navarre, and great-grandfather of the "Great Condé."]

blooded ferocity as for their valour. Condé on his side appealed for aid to the Protestant Elizabeth, who sent him an equal number of troops for the defence of Rouen, on condition that he would deliver over to her Le Havre as a pledge for the sums she had advanced. Thus was committed by the chiefs of both parties the criminal error of invoking foreign intervention in their affairs.

It was at the north, where the leaders had taken up their position and where the fighting was consequently thickest, that the fortunes of the war were finally decided. The duke of Guise, at the head of the Catholic army that Anthony de Bourbon had recently rejoined, marched directly upon Rouen, which, though scarcely tenable by reason of its position in the midst of commanding heights, offered a brave resistance. Anthony de Bourbon, king of Navarre, received during this conflict a wound of which he died. Montaigne[h] relates that during the siege a Protestant gentleman was apprehended who had been charged with the mission of assassinating the duke. The latter pardoned and set him free. "I will show you," he said, "how much more merciful is my religion than that which you profess. Your faith inspired you with the project of slaying me without hearing me in my own defence, and without having received from me the least cause for offence; mine commands me to pardon you, convinced though I am that you were preparing to kill me without reason." These were noble words, such as are sometimes spoken by ambitious individuals who aspire to every earthly glory, but are rarely borne out in their lives. The duke had not behaved with such magnanimity at Vassy and at Amboise, where he made reply to one of his victims, "My trade is not to make speeches but to cut off heads;" nor did he show greater clemency at Rouen when that city was at last obliged to surrender. "This great city," says Castelnau,[g] "full of riches of all sorts, was pillaged, without regard to the religion of either side, in the space of a week, notwithstanding that the very next day after the capture the crier had announced that every company or standard-bearer, of whatever nationality, must at once leave the city on pain of death." When all the pillaging was at an end judicial proceedings were begun.

Condé, in the hope of repairing the loss of Rouen, and reinforced by seven thousand men whom he had received from Germany, set out for Paris, the outskirts of which it was his purpose to attack. He turned first in the direction of Le Havre with the intention of joining the English troops there, but was forced by the duke of Guise to come to a stand at Dreux, on the 19th of December. There were arrayed against each other at this place fifteen or sixteen thousand men on either side. For some time the two armies were directly facing each other — "each man," says La Noue,[q] "thinking in his heart that the soldiers he saw coming towards him were neither Spanish nor Italian but French, that is to say, the bravest among the brave, and that in their ranks were doubtless many of his own comrades, relatives, or friends, whom in less than an hour he must seek to kill. Those reflections lent additional horror to the situation without diminishing the courage of a soldier." Condé penetrated to the centre of the Catholic ranks, wounding and taking captive the constable; but the Swiss restored the balance of forces, and Guise was made victor by a successful flank movement which took the prince of Condé prisoner.[c]

The admiral Coligny made good his retreat, however, with the Germans, and rallied the fugitives. The marshal Saint-André, in endeavouring to harass him, was taken and slain. The singularity of the battle of Dreux was, that each of the two generals became prisoner to the opposite party. Guise gained both ways — not less by the removal of the constable, whose

rank entitled him always to the superior command, than by the captivity of Condé. This prince was treated with the utmost generosity by his rival: they shared the same tent, the same bed; and while Condé remained wakeful from the strangeness of his position, Guise, he declared, enjoyed the most profound sleep. There were, indeed, heroic traits about the duke of Guise, that mark him to have been naturally of a generous and noble disposition. It appears that, especially when in arms and away from his brother, he could shake off the hard-heartedness, the guile, and even the ambition which in the cabinet rose to stifle every better quality.

Guise followed up his victories by laying siege to Orleans. While he was engaged in reducing this stronghold of his enemies a Huguenot gentleman named Poltrot treacherously shot the duke with his pistol. He lingered nine days, and expired with exemplary fortitude and piety. He was a brave and great man, with such power of nerve and concentrated pride that, notwithstanding his equivocal rank in France, the stern constable himself and the princes of the blood quailed before him. His virtues were his own; his vices those of his party.



CHARLES IX
(From an old French print)

The Edict of Amboise and its Results

The death and captivity of the chiefs on both sides, Coligny excepted, necessarily brought on an accommodation. Peace was declared; and the Edict of Amboise, issued in March, 1563, granted full liberty of worship to the Protestants within the towns of which they were in possession up to that day. Thus ended the first religious war, which, in addition to the events we have recorded, deluged the entire south of France with the blood of the contending parties.

The conclusion of peace restored Catherine de' Medici to the supreme authority. In order to exercise it under a less invidious title than that of regent, the parliament of Rouen, by her order, declared King Charles, now thirteen years of age, to have attained his majority. Reared by the crafty and prudent Catherine, he early acquired, in perfection, the power of dissimulation; but he never imbibed that utter indifference to both religious parties which distinguished his mother, and which allowed her to consult her own interest or the public good in leaguing with either, or in balancing and alternating between them. On the contrary, Charles, thrown among the Catholic party at an age when a bias is soon and strongly gained, amidst the bustle of war and of a camp, which pleased him, soon imbibed the zeal of the partisans of Guise. He had the sagacity to perceive that orthodoxy

was much more favourable than the doctrines of the reformers to his kingly authority. A worse effect on his character was produced by sights of cruelty; for at this tender age he beheld the atrocities practised on the Protestants at the siege of Rouen, and during the campaign. The young king was thus led to adopt, in his sober counsels, the sanguinary measures that the heat of war engendered but could not excuse.

This decision of her son in favour of the Catholics had a very great influence in finally drawing over Catherine to that party. Other causes also impelled her: the Catholics were without leaders; there was a place, therefore, for her at their head; and, in a little time, the pope and Philip of Spain both declared so strongly against the Protestants, that the queen was driven, from a principle of self-preservation, to adopt the winning side. This abandonment of her impartiality Catherine, however, delayed as long as it was in her power. After the conclusion of peace, she endeavoured to soothe Condé, and win him over to moderate demands; thus preparing the way for an accommodation. Condé was a man of pleasure, prone to indolence, in which he gladly indulged whenever an interval occurred in war or in business. Catherine held out to him her usual bait, the charms of her maids of honour; and Condé loitered, like another Rinaldo, in the toils of this Armida, until the ministers of the reformed religion recalled him from licentiousness and compelled him to marry. These stern disciplinarians were said to have hanged one of their flock for the crime of adultery. This alone was enough to alienate the courtiers of France and the demoiselles of Catherine.

The Edict of Amboise had not long been issued, when a modification of it was found necessary. That edict had allowed to the Protestants the celebration of their worship in towns which they possessed. It was found that several bishops and clergy, construing its terms in their favour, had established the new rites in their cathedrals and churches. This would have outraged the pope and the Catholic princes. Indeed, notwithstanding the clamours of the Protestants, so great a concession was not to be expected; and accordingly the privilege was withdrawn. The ancient cathedrals were not allowed to become temples of the reformed religion. New differences consequently arose: the Guises accused Coligny of instigating the murder of the duke; and the admiral arrived to answer the charge with his suite, which amounted almost to an army. Either Catherine or Charles himself took this opportunity of increasing the usual royal guard of 100 Swiss to upwards of 1,000 men. The old constable came to instigate the Parisians, and a tumult ensued, in which lives were lost.

In the following year, 1564, the young king resolved on making a progress through his dominions, especially in the south. The cardinal of Lorraine went to Rome at the same time, and Charles was met at Bayonne by his sister, the queen of Spain, and the duke of Alva. This meeting, in which the minister of Philip communicated the views of his master, completed in the mind of Charles his hatred of the Reformation, and instructed him concerning the means by which it might be eventually crushed. The Edict of Roussillon,[1] which appeared while the court was in the south, imposed new restrictions on the toleration granted by that of Amboise; so that, as Pasquier observes, "edicts took more from the Protestants in peace than force could take from them in war." The Huguenots, therefore, despairing of impartiality or justice from the court, already began to look forward to another struggle.

[1] It was this edict which ordered that the year should commence on the 1st of January, instead of, as heretofore, commencing at Easter.

During this state of things an assembly of notables was held at Moulins. Catherine, who, notwithstanding her sagacity, very often mistook the form for the reality, insisted on a public reconciliation between the Guises and Coligny. It took place at her bidding; the cardinal and the admiral embraced; but young Henry duke of Guise showed even there, by his cold and mistrustful demeanour, that his first ideas were those of vengeance and hatred. It was in this assembly that the chancellor De l'Hôpital proposed his improvements in the administration of justice. Whilst all others, prince, noble, and functionary, were absorbed in the spirit of religious party, De l'Hôpital alone, professing at once Catholicism and tolerance, but unable to obtain attention, followed the unambitious track of judicial amelioration.

Religious troubles, similar to those of France, began to agitate the Low Countries. Philip, resolving to present a high example to France, established the Inquisition among his Belgic subjects in all its vigour; and as this only made matters worse, the duke of Alva was despatched to those provinces with an army in 1567. The French court affected to fear this course, and raised an army as if against it. When the duke of Alva, however, appeared on the frontiers of France, he was treated as a friend; and the Huguenots immediately perceived that the troops were levied, not for the defence of the kingdom, but for the oppression of themselves. They accordingly leagued and armed in secret, determined to meet the perfidy of the court with corresponding guile. Their consultations ended in a project to surprise the court at Monceaux, and get possession of the king. It failed, however, as a similar plot had previously failed at Amboise, through the postponement of a single day. The queen had warning; the Swiss were summoned; and the court retired to Meaux, and from thence to Paris, pursued and menaced by the disappointed Condé.

THE SECOND RELIGIOUS WAR

Thus commenced the second religious war, in September, 1567. "Catherine," says Henault, "caused the first civil strife by favouring the reformers, and the second by irritating them." She was now at least zealously hostile to them. She had been provoked by the numerous calumnies and libels which the Huguenots directed against her, and she accordingly joined in the opinions of her young son, and of his and her ally, Philip. She no longer sought an habitual adviser in the moderate De l'Hôpital, who was of opinion that the reformers were unfairly treated. The chancellor always asserted their loyalty. After their attempt to surprise Meaux, the queen asked De l'Hôpital: "Would you now answer that their sole aim is to serve the king?"—"Yes, madam," replied he, "if you assure me that they will be treated with good faith."

Condé took up his quarters at St. Denis. The Catholics under Montmorency were posted at La Chapelle, a village that is now the suburb of Paris on that side. The constable wished as usual to procrastinate, but the impatience of the Parisians forced him to attack. The battle was fought in the plain of St. Denis: it began with a cannonade; but the Huguenots, to avoid the destructive effects of the artillery, charged the Parisians furiously, and routed them. Their flight left the constable unsupported; Condé turned on him his victorious cavalry, and Montmorency defended his position, when Stuart, the captain of the Scotch company in the service of the Huguenots, coming up close to the constable, against whom he had cause for hatred, fired his pistol and shot him. A furious and confused *mêlée*, somewhat like a

Homeric fight, immediately took place around the dead body of the constable — the Huguenots with savage zeal seeking to carry it off. They were beaten, however, and driven from the field in the attempt. Thus fell, in civil strife, and engaged against his own nephews, the veteran warrior of France. His years, his hardihood, and his name, have rendered him deservedly celebrated. His defence of Provence against Charles V is particularly memorable. By French historians he is characterised in terms of the highest encomium: they commend his sternness, his courage, his orthodoxy, and forget that avarice and selfishness sullied and almost neutralised all of his virtues.

The constable's death was a victory to Condé, who was able to offer battle to the Catholics on the following day. He denied having lost that of St. Denis. Young Charles, who was witness to a dispute on this point, asked Vieilleville who had won the battle. "Neither Catholic nor Protestant," responded the marshal; "it is the king of Spain who has won by our discord." The Huguenots had neither pay nor provisions, and were therefore obliged to quit the vicinage of Paris, directing their course across Lorraine towards the frontier of Germany, as they expected a body of auxiliaries from that country. They were pursued, but not much harassed in their retreat. Catherine endeavoured incessantly to decoy them into negotiations, the department of warfare which she felt herself most competent to direct. She restrained the warlike disposition of the king; arguing with truth that, from the violent animosities of the time, the leaders of armies marched to meet a certain fate, either in battle or at the hand of the assassin. The king's brother, Henry duke of Anjou, was created lieutenant-general. Catherine, who knew the weak and yielding nature of her second son, would gladly have made him the hero of the Catholic party in preference to young Guise, whose name she dreaded.

After much privation, during a march in winter, the Huguenots fell in with their German auxiliaries; and as they now outnumbered their enemies, they marched back into France. They laid siege to Chartres, which, being stoutly defended, kept the army fixed before it, and gave the queen full opportunity for employing her favourite efforts at negotiation. Coligny saw plainly the perfidy of these overtures; but their followers and supporters, anxious for peace, obliged them to listen to terms. A treaty was concluded at Longjumeau, in March, called the Lame Peace, as well from its infirm and uncertain nature as from the accidental lameness of its two negotiators. Its terms were a medium between the Edict of Amboise and that of Roussillon.

THE THIRD RELIGIOUS WAR

The peace was, as Coligny already saw, but a trap to ensnare the Huguenot chiefs as soon as their army should be disbanded. They were on their guard, however, keeping away from the court, and far apart from each other, that at least one might escape in case of treason. Notwithstanding this resolve, Condé and the admiral found it necessary to consult together, and for this purpose met at Noyers, a little town in Burgundy. The court was soon informed of it; and orders were instantly despatched to Tavannes, and to the other governors in the south, to arrest them. Tavannes was not vigilant in the execution of their commands, and Condé and Coligny escaped. By this order the queen had thrown off the mask; though, indeed, without such an indication, the executions and murders throughout the south sufficiently proved that the Lame Peace was never intended to be observed by the Catholics. Through inconceivable difficulties, the two chiefs traversed the

country, and reached Rochelle in safety, where the Protestants now found themselves obliged, for the third time, to raise the standard of revolt. Troops did not fail to join them from all quarters; but the most welcome aid came from Béarn, the queen of Navarre and her young son [the future Henry IV] arriving at the head of 3,000 of their subjects.

This young prince, destined to run so glorious a career, was born at Pau, in 1553. His father was Anthony of Bourbon, king of Navarre, slain at the siege of Rouen. Chroniclers never forget to relate that his mother sang at the birth, and that old Henri d'Albret, the infant's grandfather, held up the child in delight, rubbing its lips with garlic, and moistening them with wine. Excepting a short period spent at court, the boy lived the rude and healthy life of a mountaineer, and imbibed from his mother the rigid principles of the Reformation. It was in September, 1568, that he accompanied her to Rochelle.

As if to add to the horrors of civil war, winter was always chosen as the period of operations. The duke of Anjou was at the head of the Catholic army, with the marshal Tavannes for his adviser. When Condé and the Huguenots approached, the cold was so extreme as to chill the zeal of both armies. They found it impossible to engage in battle. Mutual pillage and cruelties too horrid in many instances for the pen to record were the only feats of the soldiery. During the inaction that ensued (for the winter grew to that extreme rigour which is seldom known even in France), a great part of the Huguenot army dispersed: the bourgeois and volunteers, of whom it was principally composed, each betook himself to his own home. The Catholic troops, on the contrary, were soldiers by profession, paid and disciplined. Hence, in the spring, Condé was far inferior in force to his enemies, before whom he was obliged to retire towards La Rochelle. In his retreat, the prince, having crossed the Charente, took post at Jarnac, determined to keep the river between himself and the enemy, and to dispute his passage.[d]

There was some preliminary manœuvring on the banks of the Charente; at last Tavannes surprised the rearguard of the admiral [Coligny] near Jarnac (March 13th, 1569). Condé, on receiving news of the attack, rushed up with three thousand cavalry, but at the moment of charging a kick from a horse broke his leg. Oblivious of this, however, as of the wound he had received in the arm the previous day, he continued to rush upon the enemy, crying out to those behind him: "Remember in what condition Louis de Bourbon does battle for Christ and his country!" This impetuous onslaught at first made a breach in the enemy's ranks, but Condé's horse being shot under him, he fell, and a terrific combat immediately ensued around him. An old warrior, De la Vergne, who had brought with him into battle twenty-five men-at-arms, all sons, grandsons, or nephews, made heroic efforts to protect the prostrate body of the prince, but he was himself killed, and fifteen of his followers fell with him, "all in one heap."

Condé was in the act of giving his gauntlet to a gentleman when Montesquieu, the duke of Anjou's captain of the guards, fired his pistol point-blank at his head. Thus perished a prince as energetic as he was brave, whose loss was irreparable to the party of which for nine years he had been the head that plans and the arm that executes. The Protestants talked of abandoning the campaign and shutting themselves up in La Rochelle, but a woman caused them to change their plan. Jeanne d'Albret, accompanied by her son Henry of Béarn and the young prince of Condé, presented herself in the midst of the discouraged army at Saintes. "My friends," she said, addressing the soldiers, "here are two new chiefs that God sends you,

and two orphans that I confide to your care." Prince Henry,[1] the future king of France, up to his present age of fifteen years had been brought up with all the severity that went to the training of a country gentleman. Brave, intellectually brilliant, and with the faculty of carrying away his auditors by his words, he pleased all with whom he came in contact. He was appointed general-in-chief of the army, and Coligny was given him as counsellor and lieutenant.

Admiral Coligny; the Peace of St. Germain

Coligny possessed many of the qualities necessary to a party-leader in a war such as was then waging. A Protestant of exemplary piety and austerity, he was beloved and respected by ministers and soldiers alike. He fell short of being a general of the very first rank, perhaps, and Catherine in common with the other Italians at her court did not attribute to him great depth as a politician; but he could never be made to accept defeat, which is in itself one form of power, and he had the faculty of rendering just judgment, which is another. He was a master of limitless resource, and if no particularly brilliant victory was to be expected under his leadership there was at least to be feared no irremediable defeat. In two respects his name is entitled to come down with distinction to posterity: the first of these claims is the great deed which opened his career, the defence of St. Quentin; and the second is his last political aim, the ambition to conquer the Spanish Netherlands, whither he wished to conduct his Huguenot bands that France might enjoy the double blessing of rich provincial possession and internal peace. In his deep desire to avert domestic dissensions and to assure religious liberty he had conceived still another method of accomplishing this end; namely, the Protestant colonisation of America. The very purpose which the Puritans of Great Britain brought into effect in the seventeenth century had been cherished by him. Had he succeeded, French blood and French speech might to-day dominate in the New World.

Jarnac had been nothing but a rearguard action in which the Protestants had lost no more than four hundred men. Coligny was still strong enough to defend Cognac and Angoulême; having been joined by 13,000 Germans he even assumed the offensive and inflicted a check on the Catholic army near La Roche-Abeille. But Tavannes repaired the harm done. German Catholics, Spaniards sent by the duke of Alva, Italians sent by Pius V, increased the forces of the duke of Anjou. Already pushed back to the Loire, the duke returned on his steps by means of a diversion, relieved Poitiers which Coligny had been besieging for the last six weeks, and succeeded in surprising the Protestant army between the Dive and the Thoué, near Moncontour. The position was a wretched one; six hundred Huguenot soldiers were left on the battle-field (October the 3rd).

Yet this victory of Moncontour was as useless as that of Jarnac. Charles IX, jealous of the laurels which were being gathered for his brother, came to the army, and instead of pressing the Protestants to the Pyrenees wasted his time in besieging Niort and St. Jean d'Angély. Coligny traversed the whole breadth of the south, replenishing his army as he went; and he suddenly appeared in Burgundy, at the head of all the Protestant nobility of Dauphin and Provence. A Catholic army of 12,000 men tried to stop him at Arnay-le-Duc; he held his own against them and reached the Loing, a short distance from Paris.

[1 He did not take the title of King of Navarre until after the death of his mother in 1572.]

[1570 A.D.]

Catherine de' Medici now triumphed in the council, events having proved the justness of her views. Some other means than war must be devised to gain control over a party that rose up in renewed strength after each defeat. In order to disarm the Protestants, she caused the Peace of St. Germain to be proclaimed, with terms extremely favourable to their side. They were to be allowed full liberty of worship in two towns in every province, and in all those in which the reformed religion had already been established; Calvinists were to be admitted to all kinds of office, and four fortified towns, La Rochelle, Cognac, Montauban, and La Charité, were to be given up to them as strongholds in which to place a garrison (August 8th, 1570). "A traitorous, violated peace, the perdition of those who trusted in it."[c]

A TROUBLED PEACE; THE MARRIAGE OF HENRY OF NAVARRE

What were the real intentions of Catherine at the moment when she concluded the agreement of St. Germain? She had conceived a policy in 1563, which she tried to carry out by fraud from 1563–1567, then by force mingled with fraud from 1567 to 1569. She certainly had still the same views, the same desires, but no longer the same confidence. As she had firmly believed that her object was attained after the murder of Condé, the defeat of Coligny, and the triumph of her favourite son the duke of Anjou, so she was proportionately stupefied and discouraged at seeing the final victory escape her and the unforeseen powers of those moral forces which she could not understand defeat the calculations of her Macchiavellian wisdom.

It is almost certain that in 1570, when she entered into negotiations, she desired, above all, time to breathe and to look about her, and had no fixed plan; this is what appears from the diplomatic documents. There is however no doubt that she continued to meditate the ruin of Coligny, the man who was the great obstacle in her way; the idea of destroying the leaders of the party was never absent from her mind; but in 1570 her hopes on this subject were very weak and very vague. As to the general extermination of heretics planned two years in advance by this "great queen" and pursued without deviation to the dénouement with "an admirable dissimulation," it is a romance invented by the depraved fanaticism or the cynical Macchiavellianism of Catherine's Italian panegyrists, and accepted by the resentment of the Huguenots.

The historians of Catherine have associated Charles IX with the two years of plotting and with "the admirable dissimulation" of his mother: they have done more than the Protestants themselves to draw on the name of this unfortunate and guilty prince the immense execration which has descended on him. Here it is no longer a question of mere exaggeration, but of complete error. It was not by sentiments of morality that Charles IX was incapable of deserving the hideous praises which posterity has changed into maledictions; the lessons of the masters whom his mother had imposed upon him had destroyed in him all principles; in his eyes good faith was but folly, compassion nothing but cowardice; but the passion and inequality of his humour would not have permitted him such a long perfidy, and above all he was absolutely without bias: the grudge which he nourished against the Protestants for the attempt of Meaux was balanced by the jealous hatred he bore his brother Henry, and by his distrust of his mother and the Guises. He submitted to Catherine's skilful domination as to a sort of fatality, but at times he chafed at the curb in anger, and he was quite as capable of proceeding to final acts of violence against the house of Lorraine or even against the

duke of Anjou as against Coligny. Although Catherine held him by chains scientifically forged, he might well end by turning against her the lessons she had given him.

What should he do? Whither should he turn? He had no idea. He received the schemes of betrayal laid before him by Tavannes, the adviser of his brother who desired to become his; but immediately he gave ear to the most opposite projects.

Meantime, at court the politicians had got the better of the Catholic zealots: little was wanting in order that a bloody tragedy should exhibit this at the expense of the house of Lorraine. Even before the peace was signed, the partisans of toleration had worked to prepare a complete understanding between the court and the Protestant leaders: the Montmorencys had proposed the marriage of Prince Henry of Navarre with the king's third sister, Marguerite of France. This marriage had been talked of almost ever since the birth of the two young people; Charles IX eagerly recurred to the idea, but Marguerite, then aged eighteen years, had made another choice; she was beginning the series of her innumerable gallantries and had surrendered to the young duke of Guise, the most brilliant cavalier in France, all possible rights over her heart. Henry of Guise, encouraged by the cardinal De Lorraine, wished to turn the victory of his love to the profit of his ambition and aspired to the hand of the princess. In the month of May, 1570, the marriage of Marguerite and Guise was regarded at court as a thing decided on: suddenly, in the middle of June, the king, the queen-mother, and the duke of Anjou turned indignantly against the bold pretensions of Guise; the king, who knew no half measures, gave orders to his brother the bastard d'Angoulême to kill the duke of Guise at the hunt. The bastard, not from repugnance to the crime, but from cowardice, missed the opportunity for action: the reproaches made to him by the king were heard by a courtier who, perhaps at Catherine's instigation, warned Guise: the murder of Guise would have thrown the king into the arms of the Huguenots and overturned the power of the queen-mother. The young duke, forced to renounce Marguerite, found no better expedient to appease the king than to marry another woman; he espoused Catherine of Cleves, countess d'Eu, sister of the duchess de Nevers and widow of the prince de Portien.

At this price Guise was restored to favour and followed the court to Champagne where the king, in his turn, was to be married: after long negotiations the emperor Maximilian II had granted Charles IX the hand of his second daughter, Elizabeth, without further insisting on the restoration of the Three Bishoprics to the empire. This alliance with the house of Austria in no way impelled France towards Spain: it made Charles IX for the second time brother-in-law of Philip II, who, the widowed husband of Elizabeth of France, had just taken as his fourth wife his niece, the eldest daughter of the emperor; but on the other hand it gave Charles a father-in-law from whom he had to expect no counsels but those of toleration and humanity. However, Elizabeth of Austria, a gentle, simple, and modest young woman, did not have, or seek to have, any share of influence in the events of her husband's reign. The wedding was celebrated, November 26th, 1570, at Mézières, whither the archduchess Elizabeth had been conducted by the archbishop elector of Treves, chancellor of the empire. The princes and the great Huguenots had been invited to the marriage festivities. They excused themselves, and did not quit their refuge at La Rochelle, although the admiral had written in respectful terms to the queen-mother to protest his forgetfulness of the past and his devotion.[1]

Almost two years of relative quiescence followed, during which the Huguenot party gained an increasing influence at court, chiefly through the favour shown Coligny by the king. The admiral, ever mindful of the interests of his fellow-Huguenots, attempted once more to put into execution a colonisation scheme that had long been a favourite project with him. He had made an effort to establish a colony in Brazil as early as 1555; and in 1562 and again in 1564 Charles IX had given him permission to found colonies in Florida; but all of these colonies had failed, nor did anything tangible come of his present effort.

This colonisation project tended to bring France into antagonism with Spain. But another plan of Coligny's still more directly menaced that power; this plan involved nothing less than a direct attack upon the Spanish forces in the Netherlands. Charles IX lent an attentive ear to this idea, actuated in part, perhaps, by the desire for military glory, in part by Coligny's belief that a foreign war would be the best possible means to harmonise the political factions at home. It will be understood that the Huguenot question at this time had come to be quite as much a political as a religious problem. The antagonism between the Guise faction and the Coligny faction, which led to the appalling scenes we are now fast approaching, was based by no means exclusively — perhaps not even prominently — upon differences of opinion regarding questions of doctrine. It was essentially a personal and political rivalry that actuated the chief personages in the drama. This, of course, does not necessarily impugn the sincerity of their religious differences; it was merely that these differences were not sufficient in themselves to supply motives for the bitter and ineradicable hatred with which Catherine de' Medici and the Guises regarded Coligny.

The fact that the negotiations for the marriage of the king's sister Marguerite with the Protestant Henry of Navarre were carried forward, sufficiently illustrates the superficiality of the religious element as a source of political jarrings. This marriage was, indeed, opposed by the pope, who declined to give to a heretic the dispensation necessary to legalise the marriage of second cousins. None the less were the negotiations carried forward at court in open defiance of the papal decision. Jeanne d'Albret, the mother of Henry, came to Paris and was received at court with at least the outward appearance of friendliness. Her death there in 1572 was probably due to natural causes, though the usual intimations of foul play — which the partisanship of that time never neglected as an aid to practical politics, however shadowy the evidence — were not wanting. The marriage of Henry, now king of Navarre, with the not over-willing Marguerite, took place on a specially erected platform in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris on the 22nd of August, 1572. The story goes that the bride refused to make the customary affirmations, and that her brother, Charles IX, pushed her head forward with his own hands; but this most likely is an embellishment suggested by the known preference of Marguerite for another lover, and by the uncongenial wedded life that followed the spectacular nuptials.

It may well be supposed that the Huguenots looked upon the marriage of their leader with the sister of the king of France as a great political triumph. Doubtless a large number of Huguenot nobles who had long been conspicuous by their absence from court came to Paris in honour of the occasion. To many of them it proved a fatal visit, for the awful tragedy of St. Bartholomew's day followed hard upon the wedding, turning the seeming triumph of the Huguenots into disaster and threatening actual annihilation of their party. Such being the sequence of events, it is but natural that the surviving

Huguenots should have tried to trace a causal connection between the marriage of Henry of Navarre and the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It has been alleged that the real pretext for the marriage was to beguile the Huguenot nobles into visiting Paris that they might be caught, as it were, in a trap and the more readily massacred. No one doubts that Catherine de' Medici was quite capable of such a plan. But, on the other hand, it must not be overlooked that King Charles was most anxious for the consummation of the marriage; and all historical evidence tends to exonerate him from early complicity in the plot, if plot existed. Still the fact of so many enemies being at hand may no doubt have influenced Catherine to carry into effect an idea which had at least been dear to her heart. Just how much she was influenced by this; just when the first thought of it all came to her—these are questions which Catherine herself probably could not have answered, and which it is quite futile for any interpreter of her actions to attempt to solve. Here, as so often elsewhere, the threads of design make a web too intricate for disentangling. This much, however, seems sure: the tangled mesh, whatever relations of designs and of accident in its structure, was one of which Catherine de' Medici was the main artificer; her chief assistants being her son the duke of Anjou, and the Guises.[a]

THE ATTACK ON COLIGNY

A murderous coil had been woven around the king and the admiral. Catherine had been for some time torn between her natural timidity and her ardent desire to free herself from Coligny: at one time she had hoped to obtain the admiral's destruction from the king; after a first success she had failed; a scene of an opposite kind drove her to the last extremities. The duke of Anjou himself has revealed these mysteries of crime: in a night of trouble and fear if not of remorse he dictated with his own lips the history of his own and his mother's guilt. "Every time," he says, "that the queen had conferred privately with the admiral, the queen-mother and I had found him marvellously angry and sullen, rough in countenance and aspect and still more in his answers. One day when I entered the king's room, without saying anything to me he walked up and down with long strides, often looking at me askance and putting his hand on his dagger with so much animosity that I expected to be poniarded. I managed so dexterously that while he was walking about and with his back turned to me I retreated to the door which I opened and, with a brief reverence, I made my exit." Charles IX was nearer striking at Anjou than Coligny; the admiral certainly did not urge him to raise the dagger against his brother, but he conjured him to despatch him with all speed to Poland that there might no longer be two kings in France. Catherine and Anjou, brought to bay, took their resolution. They secretly sent for the duchess de Nemours, widow of the great Guise, the woman in whose veins flowed the blood of Louis XI mingled with that of the Borgia. She had continually professed an implacable hatred for Coligny. Catherine declared to her that she placed in her hands the vengeance so long pursued by the house of Guise. Catherine desired to profit by the murder but to impose the execution and the responsibility on someone else. Her Macchiavellian mind went further: she did not doubt that the Huguenots would rush to arms to avenge the murdered Coligny and attack the Guises even in their palaces; the people of Paris would go to the help of the Guises, the Montmorencys and their friends to the help of the Huguenots, all the great nobles, partisans of Lorraine,

Huguenots and politicians, would cut each other's throats; the Huguenots would finally be overwhelmed by numbers, the Guises would be exhausted by their very victory; and royalty, held in reserve during the conflict, would remain mistress of a field strewn with dead.

Whatever *arrière-pensées* there may have been, an agreement was arrived at as to the action to be taken. Young Guise, in his furious joy, at first wished that his mother should herself kill the admiral with an arquebusade in the midst of the court; more practical means were resorted to; the blow was intrusted to a hand more expert in crime, that of the same Maurevert who had already been hired during the last war to assassinate Coligny, and who in his stead had killed one of his lieutenants under the most odious circumstances. He was sent for mysteriously and the duke d'Aumale's maître d'hôtel concealed him in the house of a canon, a former tutor of the duke of Guise, in the cloister of St. Germain-l'Auxerrois, on the road from the Louvre to the rue de Béthisi, where the admiral was staying. Maurevert remained there three days on watch. On the morning of Friday the 22nd of August, as the admiral was returning from the Louvre on foot, walking slowly and reading a petition, a shot from an arquebuse came from behind the curtain of a window, carried off the first finger of his right hand, and lodged a ball in his left arm.

Coligny, with his mutilated hand indicating the place whence the shot had come, sent to tell the king what had occurred and to ask him to judge what fine fidelity that was, considering the understanding between him and the duke of Guise; then he returned to his hôtel, supported by some gentlemen, whilst his suite broke down the door of the dwelling in which the assassin had lain in wait; the arquebuse was found still smoking; "but not the arquebusier." Maurevert had flung himself on a horse belonging to the duke of Guise which was held in readiness for him, and had fled by the rear of the house. He left Paris by the porte St. Antoine; two Protestant gentlemen had discovered his track and pursued him for several leagues, but without being able to come up with him.[1]

The king was playing at tennis when he was told that Coligny was wounded, and that the king of Navarre and the prince of Condé were coming to him to demand justice against the Guises. The circumstance both surprised and alarmed him. He threw away his racket in a passion, and after giving vent to a number of oaths, he declared he would have the assassin sought for, even in the recesses of Guise's hôtel. Charles succeeded in satisfying the young princes that the assassins should meet with exemplary punishment, and immediately ordered the president De Thou, the provost of Morsan, and Veale, a counsellor, to commence an investigation; this calmed them in some measure, and made them give up the plan, which they had agreed on, of leaving Paris immediately.

But the king felt convinced that something more must be done. He announced his intentions of visiting the admiral in the afternoon. He could not with prudence go among the Huguenots unprotected, nor could he consistently be attended by his guards; he therefore desired that all the court should visit Coligny also.

Charles entered the admiral's dwelling, accompanied by his mother, the duke of Anjou, De Retz, and his other counsellors, the marshals of France, and a numerous suite. He began by consoling the admiral, and then swore that the crime should be punished so severely that his vengeance should never be effaced from the memory of man. Coligny thanked his sovereign for such testimonials of his kindness, and conjured him to support with his authority

the execution of the different edicts in favour of the Protestants, many points of which were violated, or misunderstood. "My father," answered the king, "depend upon it, I shall always consider you a faithful subject, and one of the bravest generals in my kingdom; confide in me for the execution of my edicts, and for avenging you when the criminals are discovered." "They are not difficult to find out," said Coligny, "the traces are very plain." "Tranquillise yourself," said the king, "a longer emotion may hurt you and retard your cure." The conversation then turned upon the war with Spain, and lasted nearly an hour. Coligny complained of the Spanish government being informed of whatever was decided on; and as the intimacy between the queen-mother and the Spanish ambassador was very great and caused suspicion, he spoke to the king in a low voice. The war in Flanders was a subject of great alarm for Catherine; she knew her son's secret wishes, and she dreaded the effect which Coligny's remarks might have upon him; she interrupted the conversation and prevailed upon the king to leave the place. Charles, who was exerting himself to efface any suspicion which might have arisen in Coligny's mind, became vexed at the anxiety displayed by his mother; and as they were returning to the Louvre, being pressed to tell what Coligny had said, he declared, with an oath, that the admiral had said what was true — that he had suffered the authority to fall from his hands, and that he ought to become master of his own affairs. When the king and his suite retired, the admiral's friends expressed great astonishment at his affability, and the desire he showed to bring the crime to justice. "But," says Brantôme,[e] "all these fine appearances afterwards turned to ill, which amazed everyone very much how their majesties could perform so counterfeit a part, unless they had previously resolved on this massacre."[k]

PREPARING FOR THE MASSACRE

Catherine and Anjou returned in consternation: "We remained," said Anjou, "so bereft of counsel and knowledge of how to act that being, for the moment, unable to resolve on anything we retired, putting off our decision until the next day." Meantime they despatched to the king the count de Retz, Gondi, the man who best knew how to manipulate that fiery and pliable mind, to endeavour to appease him. Retz made him uneasy, agitated him, but got nothing from him.

The king's attitude towards the Huguenots remained the same: Charles IX launched great threats against the Guises, who were more and more compromised by the information collected by the commissioners: orders were given to arrest certain servants of their house. On the morning of Saturday the 23rd the dukes of Guise and Aumale came to seek the king and said to him, that it seemed to them that his majesty had not been well pleased with their service for some time, and that they would retire from court if their withdrawal was agreeable to him. The king "with an ill countenance and worse words" answered that they might go whither they would, and that he would always be well disposed towards them if they were recognised as guilty of what had been done to the admiral. They left the Louvre about midday, mounted on horseback and with a good following took their way towards the porte St. Antoine; but they did not quit Paris and shut themselves up in the hôtel de Guise.

Meantime the king was giving the Reformed fresh tokens of interest: he had a general list made of the Protestants who were present in Paris; he offered lodging to the Huguenot nobility about the admiral; he invited the

king of Navarre and the prince of Condé to accommodate their friends at the Louvre. The security of the Protestant princes, of Téligny and almost all those about the admiral, was complete: the vidame de Chartres (Ferrières-Maligni) twice endeavoured to persuade them to leave Paris; his advice was rejected with impatience. Ambroise Paré answered for the life of the wounded man, and this great failure in crime seemed to promise the ruin of its authors.

Most of the Huguenots indulged in vain clamours against the house of Lorraine, passing and repassing "in great companies, in cuirasses, before the lodging of MM. de Guise and d'Aumale," but they took no precautions for the night, trusting to the protection of a detachment of the king's guard and in the tranquillity of the first night which had followed the wounding of the admiral.

In the afternoon the queen-mother and the duke of Anjou summoned the count de Retz, the chancellor Birague, Marshal de Tavannes, and the duke de Nevers to the garden of the Tuileries. Of the three advisers who helped the widow and sons of Henry II to soil the annals of France with an ineffaceable stain, three were foreigners. They arranged their plan, and then all six went to seek the king in his cabinet in the Louvre. Fatal hour, which decided for Charles IX between glory with Coligny and eternal shame with Catherine; between the redemption of his misguided youth and his eternal damnation in history. The destiny of France hung on a word, on the motion of a weak head, of a mind without compass and without curb, of one who was almost a madman. And the unhappy man was alone, abandoned, in the midst of these demons!

We have the account of this infernal council dictated by that one of the accomplices who became Henry III. A few other writings of the time almost complete our knowledge on the subject. We see this impious mother artfully distilling the poison into the shuddering soul of her son, and closing round him every other issue save that of crime. "The Huguenots," she said to him, "are everywhere arming, not to serve you but to make themselves your masters: the admiral has sent for six thousand *reiters* and ten thousand Swiss; at home their leaders have an understanding with a number of towns, communities, and peoples, all agreed to reduce your authority to nothingness under pretext of the public advantage. The Catholics, on the other hand, are resolved to put an end to this state of affairs. If you refuse their advice they have decided to elect a captain-general and to form an offensive and defensive league against the Huguenots. You will be left alone between the two. Already Paris is under arms."

"How is that? I had forbidden them to arm in the *quartiers*."

"The *quartiers* are armed."

In fact the demonstrations of the Huguenots and the rumour circulated by Anjou and the Guises that the marshal De Montmorency, who after the wedding had returned to his château of Chantilly for a few days, was about to re-enter Paris "with a great force," had greatly excited the masses, and had brought out the citizen militia.

Fear began to take possession of the king. Anjou and others ardently supported Catherine. She continued, "One man is the leader and author of all this ruin and calamity; the admiral is deluding the king, making him the instrument of his ambitions and of his party, urging the state to its downfall while pretending to aggrandise it! Let the king remember the attempt of Amboise against his brother, and that of Meaux against himself when he saw himself constrained to flee before his revolted subjects!"

The memory of Meaux, as Catherine knew too well, always acted on the pride of Charles IX as a hot iron on a wound.

"The Huguenots," she resumed, "demand vengeance on the Guises. Well, you cannot sacrifice the Guises; for they will exonerate themselves by accusing your mother and your brother! And they will accuse us with good reason. It was we who struck the admiral to save the king! The king must finish the work or he and we are lost!"

Charles IX seems to have lost his head. He was seized with a fit of blind, mad fury against all and everything; his only clear idea was that he would not "have the admiral touched"; then, sinking into a melancholy dejection, he conjured all these sinister advisers to seek some other means of salvation.

Tavannes, Birague, Nevers insisted on the death of the admiral and of all the principal leaders. Retz, if Anjou is to be believed, opposed himself, contrary to all expectation, to the execution of a design which he, more than anyone, had contributed to prepare. Was it fear or was it an awakening of conscience in this corrupt man? "You will dishonour the king and the French nation; you will plunge again into civil wars, and you will be able to speak no more of peace! You will summon again the arms of the foreigner, and calamities and ruin whose end we, and perhaps our children, shall never see."

There was a moment of stupor amongst the conspirators. The man who had ruined the youth of Charles IX was holding out to him the plank of safety. The king was to escape!

They recovered themselves and made a simultaneous and desperate effort. "It is too late! The Guises are on the verge of denouncing the king himself with his mother and his brother! The Huguenots will not believe in the king's innocence. They will turn their arms against all the royal family! War is inevitable! Better to gain a battle in Paris where we have all the leaders than to risk it in the open country!"

Retz was silent. The king resisted for more than an hour and a half. "But my honour! — but my friends! the admiral! — La Rochefoucauld! — Teligny —"

Catherine saw that he was panting and exhausted: "Sire, you refuse. Give us, myself and your brother, permission to take our leave of you — to go."

He realised that Catherine and Anjou would not go far, and that the "captain-general" of the Catholics was already found. He shuddered.

"Sire, is it from fear of the Huguenots that you refuse?"

He arose; he sprang forward and intoxicated and furious: "By the death of God," he cried, "since you think good to kill the admiral, I will have it so; but kill all the Huguenots in France as well, that there may not be left one of them to reproach me with it afterwards! By the death of God give the order promptly!" And he went out like one frantic. Catherine had won — the race of Valois was devoted to the furies!

The conspirators passed the rest of the day, the evening, and a great part of the night in preparing for the enterprise. The king having gone they had discussed the heads to be proscribed. Should they strike at the princes — Henry of Navarre, a prince, and the king's brother-in-law? They shrank from this. Henry of Condé, son of him who died at Jarnac? The duke de Nevers, whose sister-in-law he had just married, had it is said, great difficulty in preserving his life. Catherine was aware that to kill the Bourbons would be to render the Guises too strong. Should they strike at

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the friends of the Huguenots, the Montmorencys? Retz, soon recovered from his scruples, advised it. Tavannes opposed it. The head of the house, who was at Chantilly, was not in their power; to kill the younger members in the absence of the eldest would be to give a leader to the civil war.

Thus it was agreed to kill only the Huguenots. All the Huguenots, as the king had exclaimed in his madness. Catherine afterwards pretended that she had the blood of only five or six on her conscience. Hypocrisy! She insisted on the deaths of only these five or six, but she foresaw and accepted the deaths of all the others. At the pass to which things had come it was no longer a question of isolated assassinations but of massacre — the massacre at least of the nobles who had come with the princes and the admiral.[1]



A Court Gentleman, Time of Charles IX

Everything was soon decided on; the duke of Guise was to begin the massacre by despatching the admiral directly he heard the signal given, by ringing the great bell of the palace, which was used only on public rejoicings. Tavannes in the meantime sent for the provost of the trades and some other persons of influence among the inhabitants; he ordered them to arm the companies and to be ready by midnight at the Hôtel-de-Ville. Those persons made some excuses and scruples of conscience, for which Tavannes abused them in the king's presence. He told them that if they refused they should all be hanged and advised the king to threaten them too. The poor frightened men then yielded and promised to do such execution that it should never be forgotten. The instructions they received were that directly they heard the bell, torches were to be put in the windows and chains placed across the streets; pickets were to be posted in the open places; and, for distinction, they were to wear a piece of white linen on their left arms and put a white cross on their hats. Notwithstanding the awful crime in contemplation, the king rode out on horseback in the afternoon accompanied by the chevalier d'Angoulême, his natural brother: but the sight of his unsuspecting people had no effect upon him. The queen also showed herself at court as usual in order to avoid suspicion.

Secrecy was desirable till the last moment and no one was informed of the plan who was not necessary to its execution. But there were several persons who caused great concern and anxiety to both the king and queen. The queen of Navarre describes herself as altogether ignorant of the affair previous to the execution; and when she retired after supper to go to bed, her sister, the duchess of Lorraine, entreated her not to go. The queen-mother was angry at that and forbade her telling anything further. The duchess of Lorraine thought that it would be sacrificing her to let her go to bed; and the queen-mother said that if she did not go it might cause suspicion and observed that if it pleased God no harm would befall her.

The count de la Rochefoucauld was a great favourite with Charles, who took such delight in his company that he wished to save his life. He had passed the evening with the king, and when he prepared to go home Charles advised him to sleep in the Louvre. In vain did he press him; the count resolved to go; the king was grieved that he could not preserve him without violating his secret, and observed as his guest retired, "I see clearly that God wishes him to perish." Ambrose Paré, his surgeon, was a person indispensable for the king's health and comfort, and he used less ceremony with him. He sent for him in the evening into his chamber and ordered him not to stir from thence; he said, according to Brantôme,[e] "that it was not reasonable that one who was so useful should be massacred, and therefore he did not press him to change his religion."

THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW, AUGUST 24TH, 1572

As midnight approached the armed companies were collecting before the Hôtel-de-Ville. They required some strong excitement to bring them to a proper mind, and in order to animate and exasperate them they were told that a horrible conspiracy was discovered which the Huguenots had made against the king, the queen-mother, and the princes, without excepting the king of Navarre, for the destruction of the monarchy and religion; that the king, wishing to anticipate so execrable an attempt, commanded them to fall at once upon all those cursed heretics (rebels against God and the king), without sparing one; and afterwards their property should be given up to plunder. This was sufficient inducement for a populace who naturally detested the Huguenots: everything being thus arranged, they impatiently waited the dawn and the signal which it was to bring with it.

The wretched king of France had gone so far that a retreat was impossible; but there is every reason to believe that even at the last moment he would gladly have obeyed the dictates of nature and have desisted from the cruel purpose. But the queen had perceived the inquietude which tormented him; she saw that if the signal depended upon him he would not have resolution enough to give it; she considered that the hour should be hastened to prevent any rising remorse from destroying her work: she therefore made another effort to inflame her son by telling him that the Protestants had discovered the plot; and then sent someone to ring the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, an hour earlier than had been agreed upon. A few moments after was heard the report of a pistol, which had such an effect on the king that he sent orders to prevent the massacre; but it was then too late.

Guise, who had waited with impatience for the signal, went at once to Coligny's house accompanied by his brother Aumale, Angoulême, and a number of gentlemen. Cosseins, who commanded the guards posted there, broke open the doors in the king's name and murdered some Swiss who were placed at the bottom of the stairs. Besme, a Lorrainer, and Pestrucci, an Italian, both in Guise's pay, then went upstairs to the admiral, followed by some soldiers. He was awakened by the noise, asked one of his attendants what it was: he replied, "My lord, God calls us to himself." Coligny then said to his attendants: "Save yourselves, my friends; all is over with me. I have been long prepared for death." They all quitted him but one, and he betook himself to prayer, awaiting his murderers. Every door was soon broken open, and Besme presented himself. "Art thou Coligny?" said he. "I am he indeed," said the admiral; "young man, respect my gray hairs; but do what you will you can shorten my life only by a few days." Besme

replied by plunging his sword into Coligny's body; his companions then gave him numerous stabs with their daggers. Besme then called out of the window to Guise that it was done: "Very well," replied he, "but M. d'Angoulême will not believe it unless he sees him at his feet." The corpse was then thrown out into the court from the window; and the blood spurted out on the faces and clothes of the princes. Guise wiped the murdered man's face in order to recognise him, and then gave orders to cut off his head.

The ringing of the bell of St. Germain l'Auxerrois was answered by the bells of all the churches, and the discharge of firearms in different parts. Paris resounded with cries and howlings which brought the defenceless people out of their dwellings, not only unarmed, but half naked. Some tried to gain Coligny's house in the hope of obtaining protection, but the companies of guards quickly despatched them; the Louvre seemed to hold out a refuge; but they were driven away by men armed with spears and musketry. Escape was almost impossible; the numerous lights placed in the windows deprived them of the shelter which the darkness would have afforded them; and patrols traversed the streets in all directions killing everyone they met. From the streets they proceeded to the houses; they broke open the doors and spared neither age, sex, nor condition. A white cross had been put in their hats to distinguish the Catholics, and some priests holding a crucifix in one hand and a sword in the other preceded the murderers and encouraged them, in God's name, to spare neither relatives nor friends. When the daylight appeared, Paris exhibited a most appalling spectacle of slaughter: the headless bodies were falling from the windows; the gateways were blocked up with dead and dying, and the streets were filled with carcasses which were drawn on the pavement to the river.

Even the Louvre became the scene of great carnage; the guards were drawn up in a double line, and the unfortunate Huguenots who were in that place were called one after another and were killed with the soldiers' halberts. Most of them died without complaining or even speaking; others appealed to the public faith and the sacred promise of the king. "Great God," said they, "be the defence of the oppressed. Just judge! avenge this perfidy." Some of the king of Navarre's servants who lived in the palace were killed in bed with their wives. Tavannes, Guise, Montpensier, and Angoulême rode through the streets encouraging the murderers; Guise told them that it was the king's wish; that it was necessary to kill the very last of the heretics, and crush the race of vipers. Tavannes ferociously exclaimed, "Bleed! Bleed! the doctors tell us that bleeding is as beneficial in August as in May." These exhortations were not lost upon an enraged multitude, and the different companies emulated each other in atrocity. One Crucé, a goldsmith, boasted of having killed four hundred persons with his own hands.

The massacre lasted during the whole week, but after the third day its fury was considerably abated; indeed, on the Tuesday, a proclamation was issued for putting an end to it, but no measures were taken for enforcing the order; the people however were no longer urged on to the slaughter. What horrors were endured during that time can be best described by those who were present, or by contemporaries.

Sully *j* gives the following account of his suffering: "I went to bed the night before, very early. I was awakened about three hours after midnight by the noise of all the bells and by the confused cries of the populace. St. Julien, my governor, went out hastily with my valet-de-chambre to learn the

cause, and I have never since heard anything of those two men, who were, without doubt, sacrificed among the first to the public fury. I remained alone dressing myself in my chamber where a few minutes after I observed my host enter, pale and in consternation. He was of the religion, and having heard what was the matter he had decided on going to mass to save his life and preserve his house from plunder. He came to persuade me to do the same and to take me with him. I did not think fit to follow him. I resolved on attempting to get to the college of Burgundy where I studied, notwithstanding the distance of the house where I lived from that college, which made my attempt very dangerous. I put on my scholar's gown, and taking a pair of large prayer books under my arm, I went down stairs. I was seized with horror as I went into the street at seeing the furious men running in every direction, breaking open the houses and calling out, 'Kill! Massacre the Huguenots!' and the blood which I saw shed before my eyes redoubled my fright; I fell in with a body of soldiers, who stopped me. I was questioned; they began to ill-treat me, when the books which I carried were discovered, happily for me, and served me for a passport. Twice afterwards I fell into the same danger, from which I was delivered with the same good fortune. At length I arrived at the college of Burgundy; a still greater danger awaited me there; the porter having twice refused me admittance, I remained in the middle of the street at the mercy of the ruffians, whose numbers kept increasing and who eagerly sought for their prey, when I thought of asking for the principal of the college, named Lafaye, a worthy man who tenderly loved me. The porter, gained by some small pieces of money, which I put into his hand, did not refuse to fetch him. This good man took me to his chamber, where two inhuman priests whom I heard talk of the Sicilian Vespers tried to snatch me from his hands to tear me to pieces, saying that the order was to kill even the infants at the breast. All that he could do was to lead me with great secrecy to a remote closet, where he locked me in. I remained there three whole days, uncertain of my fate and receiving no assistance but from a servant of this charitable man who came from time to time and brought me something to live upon."[k]



SULLY
(1560–1641)

EFFECTS OF THE MASSACRE

No allowable space would suffice for the records of such indiscriminate massacre. Charles, by his missives, ordered the same scene to be renewed in every town throughout his dominions. And the principal cities but too zealously responded. Fifty thousand Protestants are said to have fallen

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victims of the monarch's order.[1] A few commanders refused. The viscount d'Orthe wrote back to the court, that he "commanded soldiers, not assassins." And even the public executioner of a certain town, when a dagger was put into his hands, flung it away, and declared himself above the crime. The family of the Montmorencys, though Catholic, showed their abhorrence of these acts, and had the courage to take down the body of the admiral, which had been hung to the common gibbet, and to give it burial at Chantilly. Charles IX had not failed to visit it, while yet suspended. His followers complained of the odour. "The body of a dead enemy cannot smell otherwise than sweet," was his reply. He now avowed that all was committed by his orders; and even held a "bed of justice" in his parliament for the very purpose. The trembling judges, with De Thou, their president, could not but applaud his zeal. As for De l'Hôpital, who had long been banished from court, and who had abandoned the friendship of Catherine since she had joined the Guises, he expected not to be spared, and ordered his domestics to throw open the gates. They disobeyed, and the murderers were unable to reach him. But De l'Hôpital did not long survive to deplore the miseries of his country. His words were, "After such horrors, I do not wish to live." The joy of the pope, on the other hand, and of Philip of Spain, knew no bounds. The supreme pontiff went in state to his cathedral, and returned public thanks to heaven for this signal mercy.



MICHEL DE L'HÔPITAL
(1505–1573)

Charles had spared his sister's husband, the young king of Navarre, and his companion the prince of Condé. It was only at the price of being converted. Death or the mass was the alternative offered to them; and both, after some resistance, yielded in appearance. On the other hand, mere abhorrence of the massacre caused many Catholic gentlemen to turn Huguenots. Amongst these was Henry de la Tour d'Auvergne, viscount de Turenne. After all, the crime, from which so much was expected, produced neither peace nor advantage. The Huguenots were, indeed, paralysed by the blow; but the Catholics were no less stupefied by remorse and shame. King Charles himself seemed stricken already by avenging fate. He was

[1 Martin[f] says: "Nothing definite can be affirmed as to the exact number of the victims: the *Martyrologe des réformés* places it at 30,000; M. de Thou thinks this figure somewhat exaggerated; the *Réveille-matin* speaks of no less than 100,000 dead; Capilupi speaks of 25,000; La Popelinière of more than 20,000; Papyre Masson, one of the panegyrists of the occasion, reduces the number to 10,000. The last figure is too low; about twenty thousand appears to be the most probable estimate." This estimate of Martin's, confessedly only conjectural, is perhaps a trifle conservative. Sully[g] thought that 70,000 perished throughout France. Davila[h] estimated the number killed in Paris at 10,000, over 500 of whom were nobles. This is manifestly overdrawn, when we consider that the massacre of the first night was for the most part confined to the north of the Seine. Possibly about three thousand may have perished in and about Paris and twenty-five thousand in the rest of France. But this, let it be repeated, is mere conjecture.]

nervous and agitated. The blood he had spilled seemed ever to stream before his eyes. A continual fever took possession of him, and henceforth never ceased to consume him. The chiefs were equally languid, equally disunited. The Huguenots had time to rally, and to prepare for defence. Rochelle and Montauban shut their gates. Charles in his blindness sent La Noue, the Huguenot, to Rochelle; he became its commander. The town was at length besieged, and thousands of the Catholics fell before it; among them, not a few of the murderers who assisted in the massacre on St. Bartholomew's eve. At length Charles, unable to conquer, and incompetent to carry on the war with vigour, granted the Huguenots a peace. Rochelle and Montauban preserved the freedom of their religion; and Charles had the pain of perceiving that the grand and sweeping crime to which he had been impelled had but enfeebled the Catholic party, instead of insuring its triumph.

LAST YEARS, DEATH, AND CHARACTER OF CHARLES IX

Catherine, in the meantime, had the address to procure the crown of Poland for the son of her predilection, Henry duke of Anjou. She had lavished her wealth upon the electors for this purpose. No sooner was the point gained than she regretted it. The health of Charles was now manifestly on the decline, and Catherine would fain have retained Henry; but the jealousy of the king forbade. After conducting the duke on his way to Poland the court returned to St. Germain, and Charles sank, without hope or consolation, on his couch of sickness. Even here he was not allowed to repose. The young king of Navarre formed a project of escape with the prince of Condé. The duke of Alençon, youngest brother of the king, joined in it. A body of horse were to wait in the forest of St. Germain for the princes, and protect them in their flight. The vigilance of the queen-mother discovered the enterprise, which, for her own purposes, she magnified into a serious plot. Charles was informed that a Huguenot army was coming to surprise him, and he was obliged to be removed into a litter, in order to escape. "This is too much," said he; "could they not have let me die in peace?"

Condé was the only prince that succeeded in making his escape. The king of Navarre and the duke of Alençon were imprisoned. The former, accused of conspiring against the king's life, defended himself with magnanimity, and asked if it were a crime, that he, a king, should seek to free himself from durance? This young prince had already succeeded by his address, his frankness, and high character in rallying to his interests the most honourable of the noblesse, who dreaded at once the perfidious Catherine and her children; who had renounced their good opinion of young Guise after the day of St. Bartholomew; and who, at the same time professing Catholicism, were averse to Huguenot principles and zeal. This party, called the *politiques*, professed to follow the middle or neutral course, which at one time had been that of Catherine de' Medici; but she had long since deserted it, and had joined in all the sanguinary and extreme measures of her son and of the Guises. Hence she was especially odious to the new and moderate party of the *politiques*, among whom the family of Montmorency held the lead. Catherine feared their interference at the moment of the king's death, whilst his successor was absent in a remote kingdom; and she swelled the project of the princes' escape into a serious conspiracy, in order to be mistress of those whom she feared. Lamole and Coconas, both confidants of the princes, were executed for favouring their escape. The marshals De Cossé and De Montmorency were sent to the Bastille.

In this state of the court Charles IX expired on the 30th of May, 1574, after having nominated the queen-mother to be regent during his successor's absence.[d] His end was so miserable that even Huguenot writers express pity for it. His short and infrequent sleeping moments were troubled by hideous visions. Exhausted by violent hæmorrhages, he sometimes waked up bathed in his own blood, and this blood reminded him of that of his subjects which had been shed in streams by his orders. He saw again in his dreams all their dead bodies floating with the current of the Seine; he heard mournful lamentations in the air. The night before his death, his nurse, of whom he was very fond, although she was a Huguenot, heard him complaining, weeping, and sighing: "Ah nurse," he cried, "what streams of blood, how many murders! What wicked counsel I have had! O my God, pardon me and grant me mercy! I know not where I am, so much do they agitate and perplex me! What will become of all this country? What will become of me, to whom God intrusts it? I am lost, I know it well!" Then his nurse said to him: "Sire, the murders and the blood shall be on the head of those who influenced you, and on your evil counsellors." His last words were that he was glad he left no male child to wear the crown after him.

This prince, who was so guilty and so unhappy, whose name has been handed down from generation to generation, loaded with anathemas, was born with the most brilliant gifts of mind and imagination, and with less inclination to vice than most of his race. He had that real love of art which had been the glory of his ancestor, Francis I, and verses of his have been preserved, which are far superior to those of the captive at Pavia—beautiful verses, addressed to Ronsard, who might have taken lessons in good taste and spontaneity from this essay of royal genius. He loved music no less than poetry, and during his last illness melody alone had the power to soothe his pain for a moment. A detestable education had destroyed all the gifts of nature in Charles IX. When real glory was offered to him, when the chance was given him to snatch France from factions, to make her enter upon her real destiny by a bound towards her natural frontiers, by a brilliant and legitimate conquest, the unfortunate man did not have the strength to seize this unique opportunity. It came too late for him; his soul was confused and without a guide, his mind vacillating. After long struggles he became a prey to the infernal inspirations of his mother, and, as if carried away by furies, he leaped into the gulf of shame and of blood, into which he was followed by the rest of his race, and in which France came near being destroyed with the Valois.[l]

The above version of the end of Charles IX expresses the opinion held by most of the historians. Dareste,[m] however, finishes the reign of Charles IX with the following remark in regard to this generally accepted description: "During his last days there were current rumours which have been transmitted to us by D'Aubigné,[n] L'Estoile,[o] and other contemporaries. They recount his great inquietude, his idea that the phantoms of the victims of the massacre of St. Bartholomew besieged his death-bed; they tell us that he succumbed to his great remorse and these avenging hallucinations. All these accounts, of doubtful origin, are at least greatly exaggerated. His last illness, the phases and progress of which were followed by the Venetian envoys,[1] was of a most natural character. Cavalli[p] contents himself with saying that the plots during the last days of his life caused him great torture of mind and prevented his tasting an instant's repose."

[1 The Venetian despatches are regarded as among the most reliable historical sources.]

Charles IX does not lack defenders. In great contrast to the almost universal condemnation of him are the writings of some of his contemporaries. Sorbin,[t] after a description of his physical qualities, goes on to express his admiration of him in these words: "His manners were the most gentle in the world; he loved peace and quiet for his people, and desired nothing so much as to see his subjects reunited in the faith and religion of the Catholic church, which made apparent to everyone his great generosity, and showed how worthy he was to have reigned in a more happy period than the one he lived in, when the malice of his subjects kept him in difficulties. Had he reigned in a more fortunate time, the opinion of his intimate friends and his most faithful subjects and servants would have been correct, for they called it a golden age. He would have been loved by all in a good and virtuous age." [a]

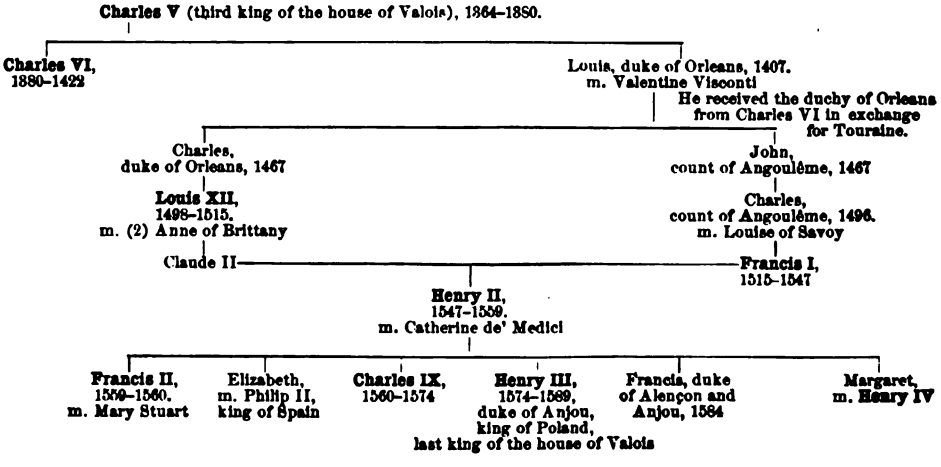
THE ACCESSION OF HENRY III (1574–1589 A.D.)

The duke of Anjou,[1] heir presumptive of Charles IX, was in Poland at the time of his brother's death. Henry was no sooner in possession of this crown than he took a dislike to the "land of the Sarmatians," where the rough and virile nobles knew nothing of the refinements of luxury and vice which the corrupt civilisation of Italy had inoculated upon France. Upon the news of his brother's death he fled from his capital at night, like a malefactor. Pursued by his subjects, who wished to keep him, he did not stop until he was on Austrian soil. The pleasures of Vienna and of Venice captivated him for a long time; he did not set foot within his new kingdom until two months after he had secretly left the old one.

The prince was ill-fitted to master the situation that his brother had left him. The victories won in his name by Tavannes had given him a great reputation; but abuse of pleasure had cooled that early ardour which had at first made him as brave as his ancestors. He no longer had a taste for any but childish or effeminate pastimes, when he did not surrender himself to horrible debauchery. It could hardly be said that his ostentatious devo-

[1] The following table shows the genealogy of the last kings of the house of Valois:

HOUSES OF ORLEANS AND ANGOULÊME



tion was a trick of impiety, but all his religion consisted in certain external practices. He thought that all his accounts with heaven and his own conscience could be settled by a fast and a few penances. Charles IX, his brother, had sometimes had ideas and plans worthy of a king. Henry had almost puerile occupations; and D'Aubigné,[n] seeing this man so careful of his toilet, his complexion, the whiteness of his hands and face, was uncertain whether he beheld "a woman-king or a man-queen." Charles IX was vicious in anger and on occasion; Henry in character and constantly. He read nothing but Macchiavelli, and, in a word, he never knew that which makes pardonable much of his brother's conduct — remorse.

His first acts showed what was to be expected of him. At Turin he repaid the hospitality of the duke of Savoy with prodigal magnificence by giving him Pinerolo, Perugia, and Savigliano, the last remains of the conquests of Francis I beyond the Alps. Hardly had he entered France when he commanded the Protestants to turn Catholic or leave the kingdom. His words were indeed menacing: but the reformers were reassured when they saw that action was limited to sending a few officers to the southern provinces, which were then much disturbed, and to processions of flagellants, in which the king took part and which went through the streets scourging their shoulders for the remission of their sins. He made a solemn entry into Paris, where he greatly scandalised serious people by having about him a great number of monkeys, parrots, and little dogs. At Rheims, "when the crown was placed upon his head," says L'Estoile,[o] "he said in a loud voice that it hurt him; it slipped twice as though it were going to fall." An evil omen was seen in this, and with reason. This head, which could not bear a crown, could no more bear the strong and virile ideas that would have been so necessary to defend it.

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

France had need, however, of an able, honest, strong chief to take up the reins of government. Castelnau[g] estimates that "already, by reason of the civil wars, more than a million persons had been put to death, all under the pretext of religion and public utility, with which both parties shielded themselves." It was only with great difficulty that Catherine de' Medici had been able to prevent a new explosion during the last days of Charles IX and the two months of her regency. Between the extreme Catholics and the fanatical Protestants a new party was gaining ground, that of the *Politiques*, composed of moderate Catholics who desired the re-establishment of public tranquillity by religious tolerance and energetic repression of factions. The three Montmorencys, Damville, Thoré, and Méru, were the most conspicuous men of this party, which includes a great number of magistrates and of rich bourgeois. A prince of the blood, the duke of Alençon, had undertaken the leadership of it, less through patriotism than through ambition, for he counted upon making use of it for his personal ends. The Guises were at the head of the Catholics, the Bourbons at the head of the Protestants; in order to be neither isolated nor second in one or the other camp he had thought it possible to form a third party that should be devoted to his interests. The Béarnais [Henry IV] justly calls him "a double heart, an evil and misshapen mind, like a deformed body." We must, however, give him credit for two things: he wished to be French, he said, in name and in fact, and an enemy of Spain; and he never stained his hands with the blood of the Huguenots.[c]

On his return to Paris, Henry III remained there for the winter and during Lent, taking part in the feasts and the devotions. Accompanied by the queen, and carrying a large rosary in his hand, he visited the churches, the oratories, and the different religious houses; an action which gave rise to numberless lampoons, libels, and satirical writings.



HENRY III

L'Estoile[o] in his journal, indifferent in the main and censorious, gives a faithful portrayal of the feelings of the Parisian people. They were anything but disposed to pardon the effeminacy and ridiculous actions of the king.[m]

They saw the descendant of St. Louis and Francis sink religion into ridicule, and knighthood into disgrace. They saw a king of France, surrounded by minions or favourites, dress himself in woman's clothes, and sing infamous ballads in a public meeting, and on the same day sing psalms through the streets dressed in the robe of a penitent — a Christian Nero, with the solemn voice of Coligny scarcely hushed, and the grim eyes of the Bible-reading Huguenots fixed on all his proceedings. As a consequence there was strife and misery in the land. Alençon, wicked as the king, and not so clever, joined the levies which were gathering round the old leaders. Henry of Navarre escaped from his honourable and close-watched detention by the swiftness of his horse at a hunting-party, and bade his adherents, who came to him in great numbers, once more "to follow the White Plume, always in the front of battle." He celebrated his recovered independence by resuming the exercise of the Protestant faith. But the great families of the Montmorencys

and others, who were merely discontented with the government, were disinclined to mix their standards with the avowed Huguenots. It was, therefore, easy for the queen-mother to break up the ill-assorted union. She sent embassies of her bedchamber-women to wait on the duke of Alençon, and in a very short time that feeble prince was detached from the cause. He, however, mediated a peace which was very favourable to the reformers. Their worship was permitted in all parts of France except in Paris; all edicts against them were withdrawn; the massacre itself was disavowed; and several additional towns were surrendered to them as pledges. This was the fifth peace since the religious wars began, and was called the Peace of Monsieur, in honour of Alençon.[1] The king, who appeared at ball and theatre with rich necklaces round his bare neck, and affected the appearance of a female beauty, had no wish, in signing this pacification, but to be left undisturbed by the anger of faction or the ambition of his brother. To separate Alençon from the Huguenots, he would have made greater sacrifices still. But the sacrifice he made was quite enough. The Catholics saw the overthrow of their faith in the terms of the treaty; the Huguenots the finger of God in the spread of their opinions.

THE HOLY LEAGUE

The Holy League began in 1576 — a league which bound itself by the most awful sanctions to extirpate heresy — to spare neither friend nor foe till the pestilence was banished, and even, if need be, to alter the succession to the throne. The next heir after the childless Alençon was a Huguenot; but ascending far above the successors of Hugh Capet, Bourbon, or Valois, there was a prince whose whole heart was devoted to Rome, and who traced his lineal descent to Charlemagne — and this was Henry of Guise, son of that old Francis who was assassinated by Poltrot, and who himself bore marks of his Catholic soldiership in a wound upon his face, which made him known as the Balafré. "No Protestant king of Navarre! We will have Catholic Henry of Guise!"

But Alençon [who hated Guise and had tried once or twice to assassinate him] was by no means pleased with this part of the league's intentions. He threw himself into its ranks by way of stemming its course, and was lost or forgotten in the tumult which raged in every heart. The king summoned the states to meet at Blois, but the states showed the somewhat contradictory symptoms, not only of hatred of dissent, but of something very like republicanism. They wished to control the royal power by commissioners appointed by themselves, whose decision on any disputed question was to be final; and being bribed and coerced by the party of the Guises, they passed an edict interdicting the Huguenot faith, and withdrawing all the guarantee towns from their hands. This was, in fact, a declaration of war; the white plume was waving in the breeze in a moment, and all the party were in arms. More sincerity arose on both sides in viewing the matters in dispute, and amalgamation became almost impossible. The king brought discredit on the league and on himself by joining it as a member. This move degraded him from being monarch of France to being one of a faction, and not even the chief of it; for in spite of Henry's calling himself the leader of the confederacy, the real authority remained with Henry of Guise. The king, for instance,

[1 The title of Monsieur for the king's brother next himself begins to be used from now on. But, according to Saint-Simon, it was not used regularly and constantly until the time of Gaston, brother of Louis XIII.]

wished to raise money, but the Balafré frowned, and the Catholic purses remained closed. He could neither command nor persuade. [In fact there seems to have been some idea of setting him aside somewhat as his fabled ancestor Pepin had set aside the last of the Merovingians.] His thoughts, therefore, were soon bent on peace. He managed to obtain a treaty at Bergerac in 1577, by which the former state of affairs was restored. A compliment at the same time was paid to the Huguenots, and a triumph gained to himself, by the abolition of the league.

But one of the articles of the league was the indissoluble "association and brotherhood of its members till its objects were obtained." Now, its objects could not be obtained while a Huguenot was favoured, or even tolerated in France, or while there was a chance of the accession of so dangerous a heretic as Henry of Navarre. War after war broke out, to the number of seven in all, and with still increasing hatred; but it is useless to particularise them. It will serve to show the curious mixture of motive and action that one of these is called the War of the Lovers, because it arose from the jealousies and rivalries of the leaders who were invited to meet at the palace of the queen-mother. That astute Italian introduced a sort of chivalry of vice in the prosecution of a campaign. She invited the young king of Navarre to come to her court with all the cavaliers he chose. There were balls and dances every night, and the appearance of the greatest cordiality; for a radius of a mile and a half was established round the house, within which quarrels and fighting were unknown. It was an oasis consecrated to the coarser Venus. But outside those narrow limits the war raged with undiminished ardour. A Huguenot lord, after joining in the same dance with a Catholic, would ask him to accompany him for a ride across the line, and the survivor came in with bloody sword to boast of the result. One night Henry gave a return entertainment to the queen and all the court. When the supper was over, and the dances were resumed, Henry slipped out of the garden, joined Sully and some other young nobles who were waiting his arrival, and rode all night. On the following day the queen-mother heard that one of her towns about thirty miles off had been surprised and pillaged; and when Henry rode back within the peaceful circle, complimented him on the success of his stratagem.

But gloomy forebodings began to mingle with these festivities. Alençon, to weaken the power of Spain, was allowed to place himself at the head of the revolted provinces. The revolt was religious as much as political, and the furious leaguers saw the brother of the king and heir of the throne enlisted against the church. His visit to London, to prosecute his claim to Elizabeth's hand, also, though terminating in ridicule and disappointment, showed his want of attachment to the true faith. He came back to Paris humiliated and unsuccessful, both in love and war. His want of zeal was discovered, and not much reliance could be placed on a man who supported the rebels of Holland and wooed the great heretic Elizabeth of England. His death, in 1584, was not lamented on any other account than that it advanced by one step the cause of a far more hated, because far more terrible opponent.*f*

THE WAR OF THE THREE HENRYS

The next heir to the throne was now the Huguenot Henry of Navarre. With such a prospect before them the Catholic party grew stronger and more determined. Three men, all Henrys, now stood forth as leaders of these parties, and of these the royal faction was least. The vacillating king sought

alliance first with one side and then with the other. His own inclination led him away from the Huguenot cause; his safety was not assured with the cause of Guise. He was not strong enough himself to have a loyal and determined following of his own.[a]

The conduct henceforth of Navarre and Guise proved a remarkable contrast. It was the interest of the Bourbon to elevate and dignify the throne to which he saw himself likely to succeed; he therefore treated with profound reverence the office of the king, and his person with outward respect. It was the business of the Guise to degrade the crown, which would otherwise have been too sacred for a sacrilegious hand to touch; he therefore treated the king with marked indignity, and stirred up the lowest passions of the mob in opposition to the highest authority in the land. By his success in this policy he made a narrow escape of exciting feelings of hatred to royalty itself, which would have punished his ambition by taking away the object of it.[f]



A GALLANT, TIME OF HENRY III

An intereresting result, however, of this attitude of the Guise party was an advance in political thinking. There were hints abroad of the sovereignty of the people. The Jesuit opponents of Elizabeth and Navarre must give up the idea of hereditary monarchy. Orthodoxy was the indispensable qualification, however, rather than popular choice; the church rather than the nation was the source of sovereignty. It was on this basis that the Guise party made a treaty with Philip of Spain. The Pact of Joinville at the end of 1584 made the league party not only a menace to hereditary monarchy in France, but by junction with Spain it became anti-national in its character. The war now became more political and less trivial. The destinies of France were at stake. But the foreign aid which made the Guise cause a European question, and widened the quarrel to one of universal religious war, was not destined to amount to enough to repress Protestantism in France. The year 1585 was spent in useless negotiations in France; during the next year the war was hardly begun, and before decisive action had been taken in France the foreign situation had changed entirely through the action of Elizabeth.[a]

On the 18th of February, 1587, the execution of Mary Queen of Scots fell like a firebrand on the Catholic plans. She had once been queen of France, and was related to the Guises. She had been true to but one object throughout her life, but that object justified and ennobled all her deeds, for it was the supremacy of the church. The violences of the league, the curses of the pope, and the threats of Philip of Spain and of all the Catholics of Europe, had led to the sad catastrophe, by showing the wise counsellors of Elizabeth that while Mary lived and plotted there was no safety for Protestantism or freedom; and now the blow recoiled with tenfold force on the persons who had made it unavoidable. Philip began his preparations for the Armada. Guise concealed no longer his enmity to the king, and roused

the populace and parliament of Paris, both of which were entirely at his command, against him. The infatuated monarch showed his usual want of judgment. He replied to the reclamations of the magistrates by confiscating their salaries, and threatening to throw them in sacks into the Seine. But no course of proceeding would probably have altered the result. Victories and defeats all had the same effect.*f*

The Battle of Coutras (1587 A.D.)

One great battle stands out in the dreary stretch of these years. Henry of Navarre had marched from La Rochelle across the Loire country to meet a German force which was advancing from the east. Henry III sent an army under Joyeuse to intercept the forces of the Huguenots and he succeeded in doing this at the strong position of Coutras. The situation was such that the Huguenots had no hope of escape except through victory. Henry had reached the château of Coutras an hour before Joyeuse and on the evening of the 19th of October, 1587; the advance guard of the Huguenots drove the duke's Albanian scouts from the town. Joyeuse, however, was afraid that the enemy would try to escape and began preparations for battle in the middle of the night.*a*

The young courtiers had sworn to give quarter to no one. The king of Navarre had only time to leave Coutras and prepare for battle, a little before day, in the angle of land formed by the two rivers Dronne and Isle. According to D'Aubigné,*n* who has left us the most circumstantial account of this day [and who was himself a soldier in the service of Henry IV], the Catholics had about five thousand foot-soldiers and twenty-five hundred cavalry; the Protestants, almost as many infantry, but hardly half as many cavalry.

The battle began with volleys of cannon. The Catholics suffered from the Huguenot artillery, which was better aimed than their own, and with loud cries demanded a charge. At the moment when the Catholics started, the ministers Chandieu and D'Amours began to chant in front of the Protestant army the twelfth verse of Psalm cxviii. At the sight of the kneeling Protestants the frivolous youths who were about Joyeuse uttered insulting cries. "They tremble, the cowards, they are confessing." "You are mistaken," replied a more experienced captain, "when the Huguenots look like that, they are determined to conquer or die." In an instant the Huguenot men-at-arms had mounted. "Cousins!" cried the king of Navarre to Condé and Soissons, "I will say no more to you than that you are of the blood of Bourbon, and, as God lives, I will show you that I am your senior." "And we," replied Condé, "we will show that you have good juniors."

The Huguenot line was formed in a crescent on a little plain. The light cavalry of Poitou, which formed the point of the crescent on the right, were driven back by a great force of Catholic cavalry, and drew the Gascon squadron of the viscount de Turenne along in their rout. The left wing of the Catholics with a shout of victory pushed on to the baggage in order to plunder, without heeding what was taking place on the rest of the battle-field. Three hundred Protestant arquebusiers, believing the battle lost and inspired by a heroic despair, threw themselves upon a large battalion of nearly three thousand of the enemy's foot-soldiers with such violence as to break through the first ranks. The rest of the Huguenot infantry followed this movement and the two bodies of infantry attacked each other with great violence.

But in the meantime the fate of the day was decided elsewhere. Joyeuse had started at a gallop with his men-at-arms spread out in a single line of lances; the three Bourbons were awaiting him steadfastly at the head of three squadrons formed six files deep. Most of the Huguenot cavalry was armed with sword and pistol; when the enemy was fifteen paces distant they threw themselves with all their might from their horses and fired point blank, while some platoons of arquebusiers stationed between the squadrons fired with surer aim upon the Catholics. The latter could not even make use of their lances. Their long line was driven back and broken. There followed a short and terrible hand-to-hand conflict, in which the king of Navarre and his cousins kept their word to one another and fought like true knights. The nobles of the court, gaily decked, plumed, dressed in velvet and embroidery, were crushed like glass by the poor and rude gentlemen of the south. These young effeminates knew only how to die.



A French Savant, Time of Henry III

The first squadrons had met at nine o'clock; at ten there was not a man of Joyeuse's army who had not either fallen or fled. The infantry had also dispersed after the defeat of the cavalry. The king of Navarre had great difficulty in stopping the carnage. The Protestants took cruel revenge for the barbarities practised by Joyeuse upon their comrades; more than four hundred gentlemen and two thousand soldiers were put to the sword. Joyeuse surrendered to two Huguenots when a third split open his head with a blow of his pistol butt. Nearly all the lords and gentlemen who had followed him were killed or taken prisoners. The booty, including the ransoms, amounted to more than 600,000 crowns. The victors had not lost forty men.

The king of Navarre showed himself worthy of this brilliant triumph by moderation and humanity. He exhibited no more pride after the victory than fear before the combat. He received all the prisoners with kindness, restored their arms to some, released others without ransom, and declared that after as before he demanded only the edict of 1577.[1]

At the same time Guise repulsed the enemy from the soil of France in Alsace. The defeat was attributed to the king, and the victory to the duke — a fatal contrast between him and Guise, of which he could not weaken the effect by comparison with Navarre. The two uncrowned Henrys were held up as models for the third, for even the Catholics saw with a sort of pride the achievements of Henry, who, though a Huguenot, was a prince and a Frenchman still. This state of affairs could not last long. Guise

made a solemn entry into Paris, and was received with all the ceremony usually reserved for a king.*l*

Henry de Guise at this time was thirty-eight years of age. He was tall and well proportioned, with blond curly hair and piercing eyes. The scar on his cheek gave him a martial appearance. Although not a great general, he possessed all the military qualities necessary to gain the love of the populace. Indefatigable, prompt of decision, rapid and sure of execution, affable, generous, familiar even, though ever guarding his dignity, he had the external gifts and the successful personality which Henry III lacked. Madame de Retz said that in comparison to him the other princes were but people. All were devoted to him. "France," Balzac said of him later, "went mad over this man; to say they loved him is too weak an expression."*m*

The Day of the Barricades and the Treaty of Union

Henry was at the Louvre, and trembled at his subject's approach. When the interview was over, Guise returned to his house and surrounded it with armed men, as if to hint that his life was in danger from the king — a very old trick, and very often successful. Everything continued quiet on both sides till some Swiss royal guards marched into the town. In a moment the mob were up in arms. Barricades were erected in the streets; pistols were fired at the passengers. The Swiss were attacked, and indiscriminate massacre began. Catherine strove in vain to induce her unworthy son to go and show himself to the malcontents. He heard the firing on his troops, and had not the courage to order them to defend themselves; and while his mother rode boldly into the streets to quell the insurrection, he slipped noiselessly to his stables, where the Tuileries gardens now are, and galloped without pause to Rambouillet. On the following day he got safe within the walls of Chartres. This was called the day of the Barricades, and for a while it certainly advanced the cause of the duke of Guise. With affected moderation he rejected the acclamations of his party, allowed the Swiss guards to escape, and in other ways endeavoured to pacify the adherents of the king.*l* To Chartres the king was followed by the now triumphant Guise, who dictated there, to the degraded king, what was thenceforward called the Treaty of Union of July, 1588. It forgave, or rather it applauded, all the outrages of Paris. It declared all heritics incapable of any public trust, office, or employment. It excluded the heretical members of the house of Bourbon from the line of succession to the crown. It raised the duke to the office of lieutenant-general of the kingdom; and it provided for the immediate convention of the states-general of France. To the observance of these terms, Henry pledged himself in the most solemn forms of adjuration.

The Meeting of the States-General

Again, therefore, the states-general were summoned to meet at the city of Blois; and, on the 16th of October, 1588, 505 deputies were assembled to listen to the inaugural oration of the king. "Among them," says the contemporary historian, Matthieu, "was conspicuous Henry, duke of Guise, who, as great master of the royal household, sat near the throne, dressed in white satin, with his hood thrown carelessly backward; and from that elevated position he cast his eyes along the dense crowd before him that he might recognise and distinguish his followers, and encourage with a glance their reliance on his fortune and success; and thus, without uttering a word,

might seem to say to each of them, 'I see you;' and then (proceeds Matthieu) the duke rising, with a profound obeisance to the assembly, and followed by the long train of his officers and gentlemen, retired to meet and to introduce the king."

The lofty consciousness of his royal character still imparted some dignity to Henry's demeanor. Addressing the states with a majestic and touching eloquence, he asserted his title to the gratitude of his people, claimed the unimpaired inheritance of the prerogatives of his ancestors, pronounced the pardon of those who had already entered into traitorous conspiracies against him, and threatened condign punishment of all who might in future engage in any similar attempts. Even Guise listened, with evident discomposure, to this unexpected rebuke, and public menace, from the lips of his sovereign. It was, however, the single gleam of success with which Henry was cheered in his intercourse with the representatives of his people; and the rest of the history of the states-general of 1588, is little else than a record of the humiliations to which they subjected him.

He spoke, as we have seen, with royal indignation, of the outrages of Paris and of Chartres: but he was compelled to omit all those passages of his address in his subsequent publication of it. He publicly claimed for himself the cognizance of all questions respecting the verification of the powers of the deputies: but he was constrained, with equal publicity, to retract that pretension. He entertained an appeal from one of the members of the Tiers État against a decision of his order: but he was sternly reminded that the states had met at Blois, not as supplicants to obey, but as councillors to advise, him. He pardoned the dukes of Soissons and Conti their having borne arms under the Huguenot standards, that so they might be qualified to take their places among the order of the nobles: but the validity of his pardon was contemptuously denied. He resisted, as an insult, the demand of the states, that he should repeat, in their presence, the oath he had already taken to observe the Treaty of the Union: but he was taught that submission was inevitable. He demanded that the states should, in their turn, swear fidelity to himself, and to the fundamental laws of the realm: but he was obliged to withdraw that demand. He insisted that the exclusion of Henry of Bearn from the succession to the throne should be preceded by an invitation to that prince to return into the bosom of the church: but his proposal was inflexibly and scornfully resisted. He commissioned two of his officers to lay before the order of the clergy his objections to the acceptance of the decrees of the Council of Trent: but his officers were driven away with insult. He solicited pecuniary aid for carrying on the war against the Huguenots: but the suit was answered by a demand for his surrender of a large part of his actual revenue.

This long series of indignities was readily traced by Henry to the guidance of a single hand. Guise was but too successfully exerting his influence at Blois to dethrone the king by degrading him. The crown, which must inevitably fall from the grasp of a prince whom all men had been taught to despise, might readily be transferred to the brows of a prince to whom all were looking with admiration.

Yet it was a hazardous policy. The king who had conquered at Jarnac and Montcontour, and who had concurred in devising the massacre of St. Bartholomew, was not a man to be restrained by the voice either of fear, of humanity, or of conscience. The friends of Guise saw, and pointed out to him, the danger of provoking the dormant passions of the enervated Henry; but he received their remonstrances with contempt, and habitually and

ostentatiously placed himself within the powers of the sovereign whom he at once despised, exasperated, and defied.[w] This contemptuous attitude was to lead to his undoing.

THE ASSASSINATION OF HENRY, DUKE OF GUISE (1588 A.D.)

On December 23rd, at three o'clock in the morning, the duke of Guise left the room of Charlotte de Beaune, and found on returning to his house five notes which warned him to leave Blois immediately. His attendants begged him to take refuge without delay with his troops; but being weary he retired to sleep. At about eight o'clock, he got up, dressed himself in a new gray satin doublet, too thin for the season, took his cloak, went out, passed over the drawbridge and entered the castle.

Henry III, during the same night, prepared the ambuscade. The evening before, at seven o'clock, he told Liancourt, the chief equerry, in a loud voice, to order his coach for four o'clock in the morning, because he wished to visit a shrine and return in time for the council. He gave a secret order to the Corsican Ornano, and to the forty-five Gascons of his especial guard, to be near his room the following day at five o'clock; then he shut himself up in his private chamber. At four he rose and went out, saying nothing to the queen, who was uneasy. He ascended one flight with Du Halde, led him into a gallery which he had divided into fifty cells, during the last two or three days, under the pretext of lodging there some Capuchin friars whom he wished to have constantly near him, but in reality to hide and separate all those who were to take part in the premeditated act. He pushed Du Halde into one, and without speaking a word shut him in. Towards five o'clock the forty-five guards presented themselves, one by one. He took each one in turn to the higher landing, and locked them up, each in a separate cell.

The members of the council convoked for six o'clock arrived, and not noticing anything strange on the staircases or in the corridors, began their sitting. As soon as the king had seen Cardinal De Guise, who was staying in the town, at the hôtel d'Allaye, enter the large hall, he ascended to his cells, opened the doors, made his men come down, took them into his room, having commanded them to make no noise so as not to awaken the queen-mother, who was dying on the lower landing. The glimmering light of the December dawn and the light from the king's candle but dimly showed their uneasy countenances and eager eyes. The king made a speech to his forty-five men, urging them to avenge him; he was delighted to find that his oratory was more successful than it was with the state deputies. These young noblemen, suddenly transported from their Gascony cottages, where they suffered hunger and every sort of privation, to become the confidants of the king, to enter his chamber, to hear themselves called his champions, his avengers, his friends, must have been the more amazed at this sudden fortune, in that the duke of Guise had threatened to plunge them back into their former misery.

By the advice of the duke of Guise these forty-five noblemen, sent by the states to entreat the king to reform his household, were to be dispersed as unnecessary. Still boorish, and knowing nothing beyond the patois of their villages, they remained homely and unaffected. One of them, called Périac, dimly understood that the king's speech showed that it was necessary to stab the duke of Guise, and he interrupted him with a joyous familiarity, striking him in the stomach with the flat of his hand, and crying out to him,

[1588 A.D.]

"Cap de Jou, I'll kill him for you!" Reassured by the enthusiasm of these young men, Henry III himself posted them in his room and in the passages; then he retired to his private chamber, impatient and troubled at not having seen the duke of Guise arrive, but learning finally, at half-past eight, that Henry of Guise had just entered the council-room.

Henry of Guise had felt very cold in his satin doublet; his night had exhausted him. As he entered he felt sick and faint; his eyes were full of tears. "I am cold," said he, "let me go to the fire." Whilst more wood was being thrown on the fire, he said to M. de Morgondaine, keeper of the treasury, "I beg of you to ask M. de Saint-Prix to give me some Damascus raisins, or some preparation of roses." They could only find some Brignolles plums, which he began to eat. M. de Marillac, master of requests, read a report upon the salt-taxes, when the door opened and Revol, secretary of state, was seen to advance. He said to the duke, "Monsieur, the king asks for you; he is in his old room." Then he hastily went out. The duke did not notice this hasty retreat, nor the agitation of Revol, who was so white that the king had come to him a minute before, and said, "My God, Revol, how white you are! Rub your cheeks, Revol, rub your cheeks." The duke of Guise got up, put some prunes in his silver comfit plate, leaving the rest upon the cloth. "Gentlemen," said he "who will have some?" He threw his cloak upon his left arm, took his gloves and the comfit plate in the same hand, placed the fingers of his right hand upon his beard, was saluted and followed by the forty-five who were waiting for him. Two paces from the door of the old room he turned to see why they followed him, and immediately received first a sword-thrust in the back, then innumerable stabs from sword and dagger. Seizing hold of some of his murderers he dragged them along with him, and fell near the king's bed.

On hearing this noise Cardinal De Guise broke up the council and rose: "Ah," he cried, "they are killing my brother!" "Do not move, sir," answered the marshal D'Aumont, drawing his sword, "the king has need of you!"

At the same moment, the king half-opened the door of his room, and seeing the body gave orders for the pockets to be searched. Whilst they were carrying out this command the Balafré, uttering a long, deep, and husky sigh, died. The body was covered again with a gray cloak and with a cross of straw, and left lying there for some time exposed to the taunts and mockeries of the courtiers, who called him "the handsome king of Paris." They were not content with insulting him by words alone. "A diamond heart," someone says, "was taken from his finger by the sieur D'Entragues." To prevent the members of the league procuring any relics of their leader, the dead body was burned, by order of M. de Richelieu, grand provost of France, and the ashes were thrown into the Loire.[s] The cardinal De Guise and many other partisans of the house of Guise were arrested. The president of the Tiers État, and three other conspicuous Leaguers among the members of that body, were made state prisoners. The cardinal De Guise was murdered next day.[a]

It is said that when Henry III was certain that Guise had expired, he stepped from his room, sword in hand, and cried out: "We are no longer two! I am now king!"[1] then pushed with his foot the still quivering body. It was just sixteen years since Guise, at dawn of a fatal day, had struck with his foot another corpse!

[1 When he repeated the remark to his mother, she is said to have replied: "God grant you have not made yourself king of nothing."]

DEATH OF CATHERINE DE' MEDICI

Another famous death soon followed that of the Guises. The queen-mother had been violently affected by the catastrophe of December 23rd. Several days after, she visited the cardinal De Bourbon in the apartment whither he had retired. The cardinal broke forth in reproaches and accused Catherine of having caused the assassination of the Guises. This scene so disturbed the aged queen that her gout became worse; she was confined to her bed and never recovered. The 5th of January, 1589, at the age of sixty-one years, she joined her accomplice in the disaster of St. Bartholomew. The other accomplice, doubly an assassin, was not long in following his mother.

The death of this woman, who had figured so prominently in Christian affairs for thirty years, made but a feeble sound in the midst of the tempests that rose from the ashes of the Guises. The importance of Catherine had diminished greatly in the last few years: justly punished through the only source which could affect her, her love for Henry III, she had seen her power wane at the moment when she hoped to reign completely: neglected by her favourite son, half sacrificed to the favourites, at enmity with her son-in-law the Béarnais, she finally was without guidance; the race of Valois, which she had dreamed to place on all the thrones, being without issue, the Bourbons being her enemies, with the instinct of family, always found in a woman even the most corrupted, her hopes turned to the children of her eldest daughter; she thought to found a Lorraine dynasty; and only made herself the instrument and the puppet of the league. Her qualities as a ruler cannot be judged by the last years of her life: although morality and patriotism equally forbid the justification of this fatal woman, the historian must acknowledge that when it was possible to combine the policy of her family with the policy of state, she pursued two ideas which were beneficial to the destiny of France — the humiliation of the great, and resistance to the house of Austria. The end which she failed to attain by treachery and deceit might have been gained by the force and audacity of a genius more magnanimous: Richelieu was in this regard the happy inheritor of Catherine's idea.[1]

THE SIEGE OF PARIS AND THE DEATH OF HENRY III

Heaven and earth rose against the massacre of Blois. It seemed a wilful playing into the hands of the Huguenots to remove the Catholic chief, and the pope looked on the deed not only as murder, but as heresy. The unruly capital burst into a cry of disobedience, and the Sorbonne formally withdrew the allegiance of the people from an unworthy king. The name of royalist was as fatal as that of Huguenot had been. The president Harlay, and sixty of the councillors, who bore the royal commission, were only saved from death by being taken to the Bastille.[f] But in the midst of this general indignation, the states-general, and they alone, were, in appearance at least, unmoved. Occasionally, indeed, and even earnestly, they solicited the release of the prisoners. But they breathed not so much as a single remonstrance to the king against his enormous infringement of their sacred character and privileges in the persons of their colleagues. With an almost incredible abjectness they addressed themselves at once to the ordinary business of the session, and discussed with Henry, amendments in the law of treason, schemes for the admission of his officers to join in their deliberations, and plans for bringing to account all public defaulters. They pre-

sented to him, not indignant defiances, but humble descriptions of the sufferings of his people, and meek supplications for the redress of them; and continued, during a whole month after the death of the Princes of Lorraine, to prostrate themselves before the king, as in the presence, not of an assassin, but of a conqueror. The session then closed with the royal audience customary on such occasions; when, in the hope of propitiating his favour to the imprisoned deputies, they addressed him in a speech in which his royal virtues, and especially his *clemency*, were lavishly extolled. On the 16th January, 1589, they at last took their leave of their sovereign, and of each other: when "we parted," says their great orator and memorialist, Bernard, "with tears in our eyes, bewailing what had passed, and looking forward with terror to what was yet to come; and observing that, in our separation, France had an evil augury that she herself was about to be torn in pieces."

The augury was but too well verified. The states-general of France never again assembled till they met ineffectually in the reign of Louis XIII, to be then finally adjourned till the eve of the French Revolution.[w]

Notwithstanding all this, however, when the meeting at Blois was dissolved, the members spread the flame of disaffection through town and country. The duke of Mayenne, brother of the murdered Guise, was declared by the council of Sixteen, consisting of deputies from the sixteen quarters of Paris, lieutenant-general of the kingdom, till the states-general could be assembled. In short, the king was deserted by his people, and nothing was wanting but the formal sentence of his deposition. Henry of Navarre saw his inheritance endangered, and came to the rescue. An interview took place between the cousins—the most Christian king, and the most chivalrous Bourbon. It was not altogether regard for his own interests which moved the new ally. In so unsettled a nation as France then was, a forcible change of dynasty would have led to unending conflict. To save his country from perpetual civil war or total anarchy was the object of Henry's efforts. His plans were bold and masterly. The few devoted adherents who still clung to their sovereign, from hereditary attachment, or from the poetic compassion which binds noble natures to a fallen race, accepted the guidance of the Huguenot chief. Mayenne was repulsed from Tours, and when men saw such measures of tenderness, as now distinguished the royal army, announced in the royal name, and such admirable military tactics displayed under the royal banner, the personal vices of the nominal monarch began to be forgotten.

Opposition was paralysed by the consciousness that the royal authority was now supported by conduct worthy of a king; and at the end of July, an army of forty thousand men, confident in their leader, and restored to the full feeling of loyalty to the throne, commenced the siege of Paris. Henry of Valois gazed on the hated battlements with delight. "Farewell, Paris," he said; "from this time your towers and pinnacles shall offend my eyes no more. I will make it difficult to discover where your position was." But Henry of Navarre was more wisely employed. He was superintending the placing of the troops, bringing up the guns, arranging the tents; and it was understood that the day of assault was fixed for the 2nd of August. Mayenne saw no chance of safety. His garrison was weak and dispirited; the populace, with its usual fickleness, was cowardly where it was not mad.

But among the rabble there was a youth of twenty-two, who had been a Jacobin friar for some time, and had degraded the cowl by the wildest excesses, both of debauchery and blood. Every crime was sweet-smelling odour to Jacques Clément the monk. He wore a dagger which was displayed

with ferocious energy in every quarrel, and yet was fanatical in his religious beliefs, and carried the practices of superstition and idolatry to an almost insane extent. This was a sort of man who might be extremely useful in the distress to which the Catholic party was reduced. He was sent for by the duchess de Montpensier, sister of the duke of Guise, a woman so wicked that her conduct drives us into a charitable unbelief of its reality, who used such arguments and arts with the blinded, arrogant, sensual young fanatic, that he went forth on the 1st of August determined to repay his benefactress for her goodness and condescension in the way she herself had prescribed. Letters were furnished to him, which were obtained by false pretences from the president Harlay in the Bastille, and on presenting them he was admitted to the camp of the besiegers, and taken into the presence of the king. While Henry was reading the missive which Clément put into his hand, the Jacobin drew a knife from his sleeve, and stabbed him in his chair. It was not at once fatal. The king started up, and, drawing the weapon from his side, wounded his assailant in the face, thus mixing on the same blade the blood of the assassin and his victim. The attendants rushed forward and killed the murderer at once — a happy chance for his employer, for her name escaped the formal revelation which a trial would have produced. Henry was placed in his bed, and for a while hopes were entertained of his recovery.

Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it. An undiscovered spring of goodness welled forth as his last hour drew nigh. He forgave his enemies, recommended himself to his friends, embraced the hero of Navarre, and thanked him for all his aid. He turned to the crowd in the apartment, and declared Henry his rightful and true successor, and added, "Dear cousin and brother-in-law, be sure of this, you will never be king of France unless you profess yourself a Catholic." If the dignity and tenderness of a death-bed could have wiped out the vices and deficiencies of all his former years, Henry III might have been reckoned among the kings who have done honour to the crown. But the inflexible verdict of history must be delivered upon the course of a man's life, and not on the expressions or aspirations of his last hours: and the last of the Valois must be pronounced a king without honesty or patriotism, and a man without courage or virtue.[f]

The Valois had given to France thirteen kings in the space of 261 years. They had assisted and contributed to the decline of old feudal France: they seemed at first during several reigns to institute a new order; then, incapable and weak, they let slip from their hands this great work, and disappeared after having plunged France into chaos.[m]



CHAPTER XIV

HENRY OF NAVARRE, FIRST OF THE BOURBONS

[1589–1610 A.D.]

It is my wish that every peasant may have meat for dinner every day of the week, and a fowl in his pot on Sundays. — HENRY IV.

HENRY'S STRUGGLE FOR THE CROWN

JACQUES CLÉMENT in killing Henry III, whom he found not Catholic enough, opened to a Huguenot the road to the throne. This was Henry, king of Navarre, to be known in future as Henry IV of France.[b]

Henry IV has been compared to Francis I. His face has, in fact, the same large outlines, the same sensual mouth and brilliant eye, the same smile full of an attraction that is sometimes deceptive, the same expression of countenance whose openness is not always that of sincerity. But we must not be misled. This quick, ardent eye sometimes looks within to depths unattainable to Francis I; and above these projecting eyebrows, a sign, as with the Valois, of quickness of perception, rises instead of the low forehead of Francis I the vast brow of genius. Though Henry too pushed voluptuousness to the point of license, he nevertheless had tenderness if not constancy of heart. Though his language has too much of the unstable levity with which his Gascon race is reproached, though the confinement of his youth in the most depraved of courts and later the infinite difficulties of his position changed the cordial spontaneity of his nature, he nevertheless has a reserve of true and strong feeling that Francis I never knew. Apparently selfish, he was able in reality to associate his interests and his glory with the idea of the welfare of France and the interest of humanity. Infinitely superior in essential things to the Valois and the Guises, he is their inferior in elegance, in external dignity. Compared with the other two Henrys he has the air of a soldier of fortune before princes, but he redeems this inferiority of manners by a singular charm; he attracts the imagination and the heart by an irresistible mixture of shrewdness and good nature, of tenderness and sharp raillery, of ardour and calculation, of gaiety and heroism, of authority and the

comradeship of the soldier. After two centuries and a half he is still irresistible when we see him act and hear him speak in history, when we follow him almost day by day in the truly unique monument of his prodigious correspondence. The most severe, whether historians or moralists, after many and too often deserved reproaches, almost always end, if they are French, by extending their hands to the most French of the kings of France.

We shall witness the stubborn struggle in which he fought for his throne; after the struggle we shall see what his work was as re-organiser of domestic peace and founder of foreign politics. The immediate effects of the death of the last Valois in the rebellious capital and in the besieging army announced only too forcibly to the first of the Bourbons the immense tasks and the immense perils that confronted him. The news of the death of Henry III was spread in Paris after the morning of the 2nd of August; all doubts were dissipated when the duchesses de Nemours and de Montpensier were seen driving through the city in their coaches and crying out on all the squares: "Good news, my friends — good news! The tyrant is dead! There is no more a Henry of Valois in France!" The mother of the Guises, mad with joy and vengeance, mounted the steps of the high altar of the church of the Cordeliers to harangue the crowd. Her daughter distributed everywhere scarfs of green, the colour of hope and joy, instead of black scarfs. In a few moments the multitude passed from consternation to frenzy. There was nothing but "laughter and singing," tables set in the streets, feasts in the open air. In the evening bonfires burned on all the squares. Everywhere resounded the praises of the "new martyr" who had given his life for the good of the people. The blessed Jacques Clément was honoured in the pulpits, sung in the streets, invoked as a saint. Images of him, painted and sculptured, were set in the place of honour in private houses, in public places, in churches, and even on the altars! His old mother was brought to Paris, loaded with presents and



HENRY IV

shown to the people "as a wonder," who had borne in her bosom the liberator of the church.[c]

When the intelligence reached Rome, the rejoicings were still more revolting. Sixtus pronounced the assassin's praises in full consistory, and compared his achievement in usefulness and self-sacrifice to the incarnation and crucifixion. In Germany and England the deed was differently viewed. Elizabeth got ready troops to be landed in Normandy in aid of the new king. Lutherans and Swiss came pouring into France. Yet Henry's position was dangerous and undefined. The nobles who commanded his armies were Catholics as zealous as the enemy. Before the corpse of the late king was cold, they proposed to his successor a retraction of his Huguenot errors, and conformity to the church. "You don't know what you ask," replied Henry. "You require a change which would argue no sincerity either in one faith or the other. If you think to terrify me to so sudden an alteration, you know neither my courage nor my conscience." "Sire," cried the gallant Givry, and kneeled at his feet, "you are the true king of the brave, and none but a coward would desert you."

The others, however, hung back. The spirit and principles of the league remained unbroken. The cardinal De Bourbon was even proclaimed by Mayenne under the name of Charles X. All the victories which made Henry's name distinguished had been gained over Catholic foes. If full powers were conveyed to him, would his policy of depressing the leaguers not be continued? Henry came to an agreement. He consented to accept a conditional allegiance, binding himself to study the doctrines of the Catholic faith; to summon a states-general at Tours; to restore to the churches the goods of which they had been despoiled; and to limit the privileges of the reformers to the places in which they at present existed. These things were all to be done within six months. In reliance on these terms, he was recognised sole sovereign of France, and entitled to the obedience of all.

But Paris still resisted, and riots and massacres were continually renewed under pretence of religious fears, till Mayenne himself was glad to leave that city of contention and misrule, and take the field against the Man of Béarn, as he was insultingly called. The quality and composition of the contending forces had greatly changed. Mayenne, at the head of preponderating numbers, besieged Henry in Arques, and was only repelled by the union, which his great rival displayed, of the courage of despair and the calmness of military skill. With a mixed army of English, French, Germans, and Swiss, he found it difficult to keep them together, as his purse was low, and the diversity of tongues and nations prevented the unity of the force. To fight was the only way to combine those discordant elements; and on the 13th of March, 1590, the battle of Ivry took place.[d]

The Battle of Ivry

The plain on which the king desired to offer battle to the leaguers extends to the west of the river Eure, between Anet and Ivry; neither bank, hedge, nor any natural obstacle intersects it, but in the middle the ground slopes almost imperceptibly, so that the royal army, protected on the one side by the village of St. André, and on the other by that of Turcanville, could not be reached by the enemy's artillery. Henry IV, having seen to the rest and refreshment of his forces, occupied this position on Tuesday, March 13th; his cavalry, which was almost entirely composed of nobles, and upon which he consequently placed most reliance as being more dependable in point of

honour, he divided into seven divisions, each of them supported by two regiments of infantry. Marshal D'Aumont, the duke de Montpensier, the grand-prior assisted by Givry, the baron de Biron, the king, the marshal De Biron, and Schomberg, commandant of the *reiters* (German troopers), were at the head of the seven divisions.

Whilst the army was taking up its position, it was joined successively by Duplessis, De Muy, La Trémouille, Humières, and Rosny, who, with two or three hundred horse, came from Poitou, Picardy, and the Île de France to take part in this much desired engagement. The last comers were nearly all Huguenots; up to now but very few had been numbered among the army.

The duke of Mayenne did not suppose that Henry wished to await him, but flattered himself he would overtake him in crossing some river in his retreat upon Lower Normandy, so hurried on his march in expectation of this, not without exposing his own forces to that disorder in which he expected to find the enemy. But on reaching the plain of Ivry, on the afternoon of March 13th, he beheld before him the royalists awaiting him, drawn up in order of battle with the advantage of position. He slackened his march to restore order to his forces, and did not come within range of the enemy until evening, when it was too late to contemplate beginning hostilities. The weather was very unfavourable, and the soldiers of the league, wearied by the cold rain they had experienced throughout their march, were forced to sleep in the open, only a few officers succeeding in pitching their tents, whilst the royalists established themselves for the night in the villages of St. André and Turcanville.

On the morning of Wednesday, March 14th, the royal army occupied the same position as on the previous day. The two armies were not ranged in order of battle until ten o'clock. D'Aubigné relates that whilst putting on his helmet Henry addressed these words to his companions-in-arms: "My friends, God is for us! Behold his enemies and our own! Behold your king! At the enemy! If your ensigns fail you, rally round my white feather. You will find it in the path that leads to victory and honour!" These words were received with a universal cry of "God save the king!" and the battle began.

The royalist artillery directed their fire full upon the leaguers, who were exposed upon the rising ground; that of the league, on the contrary, was unable to reach the royalists, sheltered as they were in their hollow. Count Egmont, stationed at the extreme right of Mayenne's army, would not wait for a third discharge from this artillery, and fell furiously upon the light cavalry of the grand-prior, which was opposite him and which he overthrew. With the same impetuosity he came up to the cannon of the king, which had cut up his company. "Friends," cried he, "I will show you how the weapons of cowards and heretics should be served," and, turning his horse at the same moment, he backed it up against the royalist guns. Not one of his warriors but wished he could boast of having done as much. They lost not only their time in this extraordinary manœuvre, but all Egmont's cavalry fell into disorder. No longer carried forward by that impetus which constituted its strength, it was attacked simultaneously by Marshal d'Aumont, the baron de Biron, the grand-prior, and Givry. Egmont and his chief officers were killed, all his followers routed and cut to pieces.

In another part of the line the duke of Brunswick, who led the leaguers' reiters, was also killed. These reiters were accustomed after each charge to pass through gaps left for the purpose between each battalion to form again behind the line; but the viscount de Tavannes, to whom Mayenne had



THE ENTRANCE OF HENRY IV INTO FRANCE

[1590 A.D.]

intrusted the drawing up of his army in battle array, was so short-sighted that he mistook the interval that should be left between the corps, so that there was not sufficient space left for this manœuvre. Thus the reiters returning from the charge, bore down upon the duke of Mayenne's squadron of lancers, and threw it into disorder. The duke was forced to repulse them at the point of the lance, for there was no room to manœuvre his horses, and whilst striving in vain to restore order, he was violently charged by the king, who perceived his predicament; he was routed and forced to fly to the woods. Soon all the cavalry of the league shared the same disastrous fate, the battalions of infantry, hitherto covered by the cavalry, now found themselves alone in the middle of the plain, and attacked on all sides by the king's forces.

The Swiss, though as yet not routed, held up their arms in token of surrender, and were immediately given quarter by the marshal de Biron; the lansquenets, encouraged by this example, and at the same time weakened by this defection, also held up their arms, declaring that they surrendered. But Henry and his soldiers held them in particular abhorrence. Several of them had been already concerned in the treachery of Arques, where they had feigned to give themselves up; several, engaged by the Protestant princes to reinforce the royal army, had gone over to the enemy; the king declared that they had transgressed against martial honour, and that he would give them no quarter. The massacre lasted a whole hour, but whilst they were being killed without resistance, the king cried, "Spare the French and put the foreigners to the sword!" And, as a fact, after the *mêlée* no more French were killed.

The fugitives of the league sought refuge, some in Chartres, some at Mantes. The bridge of Ivry, by which they made their escape, gave way, and the king's cavalry, in order to pursue them, was forced to go by a longer route and to cross the Eure at Anet. The losses of the army of the league were nevertheless very considerable. Davila[f] reckons them at six thousand men; D'Aubigné,[e] calculating the armies as being weaker by one-half than his estimate, also reduces the loss of the leaguers by the same amount, namely one-half. Since the beginning of the civil wars no such brilliant victory had yet been won. Henry IV, victor at Coutras, victor at Arques, victor at Ivry, seemed to surpass his rivals both in military ability and good fortune, and the people rejoiced as much in his good luck as in his skill.[g]

After this a new power displayed itself, which had never played a part in the quarrels of a nation before. It was the brilliancy of the sayings of the new king, which spread all through France, the land of all others in Europe where a brilliant saying has most weight. After the combat of Arques, where he had been foremost in the attack, he wrote to his friend the duke de Crillon, "Hang yourself, brave Crillon; we have fought at Arques, and you weren't there." At supper, on the night before the battle of Ivry, he had spoken harshly to an old German of the name of Schomberg; and while he was marshalling the troops before the charge, he stopped his horse. "Colonel," he said, "we have work before us, and it may chance I don't survive; but I must not carry with me the honour of a gentleman like you. I beg your pardon for what I said last night, and declare you a brave and honourable man." He embraced the colonel. "Ah! sire," said the German in his broken language, "you kill me with your words, for now there is nothing for it but to die in your defence." Schomberg did so. He rode up to the rescue of the king in the hottest of the fight, and fell before Henry's eyes.[d]

The Duke of Parma and the Spaniards

The change that came over public opinion after the battle of Ivry raised the hopes of the royalists. Henry was no longer a contestant but the logical master of the realm. This feeling of the people caused Henry to move but half-heartedly against Paris where the strength of his opponents lay. He besieged the city, but he did not forget that the inhabitants were his own people. He permitted Mayenne to send out the useless people, said to number some six thousand.[a] Henry fed them, and soothed their fears. Some peasants were brought before him for having introduced provisions into the beleaguered town, and expected to be hanged for aiding the rebels. He gave them all the money he had in his purse. "The Man of Béarn is poor," he said; "if he were richer, he would give you more."

Compared to these actions and words of Henry, the conduct of his opponents was not only unchivalrous but unpopular. Divisions raged high among the leaders of the league. Mayenne wished to be king; the duke of Lorraine wished his son to be king; and when Henry of Guise, the son of Balafré, escaped from his prison of Tours, and joined the garrison of Paris, he also wished to be king. The infanta, or daughter of Spain, wished to be queen; and it did not need half the quickness which is always found in the French to perceive that, compared with any or all of his competitors, the man of the white plume and the generous spirit was the fittest occupant of the throne.

But a rigorous pontiff filled the Roman chair. Sixtus V would hear of no accommodation with a heretic, and Henry would hear of no recantation when his motives might be suspected. "Master first, disciple afterwards," was his motto, and the war went on. The Sixteen, as the sections of Paris called themselves, were in the pay of Spain. Availing themselves of the absence of Mayenne, they encouraged the brutal populace to break out into a riot; they tore the more moderate of the judges from their seats and hung them, with their president, above the doorway of the court. Mayenne came back. Great was his fear of Henry, but greater his wrath against the Sixteen. He hanged four of them from lamp-posts in the street, and restored the ordinary municipal officers to their authority. But regular authority dislikes rebellion, and the now pacified city looked kindly on the legitimate heir.

Other opponents were driven over to his side by the injudicious aid his enemies received. Alessandro Farnese, duke of Parma, was the most famous general of the time, and had been chosen to bring the legions of Spain and the chains of the Inquisition over to France in the year of the Armada, 1588. He was now selected to head the same legions to support the fantastic claim of his master's daughter. Henry was driven to extremities, for Alessandro was unluckily the most cautious of commanders, and always refused a battle. The daring gallantry of the royalists, with Henry at their head, fell back like sparkles of foam before the imperturbable solidity of the Spanish lines. They would not fight — they would not retreat — they solemnly performed the work assigned to them, the protection of a border or the relief of a town, but they would do nothing more. Alessandro of Parma had nothing of the hero in him except his courage, and trusted nothing to chance. Against policy like this the Man of Béarn had no defence. His allies were not united in their desires. The English wished to drive the Spaniards from the shores of Brittany and Normandy, where they would have been dangerous neighbours to Elizabeth; Henry wished to drive them from the middle of France and send them to the shore, where they could do least harm to himself. He

could raise no taxes by the legal machinery of parliament and council, and would not lay hard contributions on the districts he held.

He was the poorest of gentlemen, this most lovable of kings; and hints are given that his majesty's apparel was not altogether free from darns, or his boots from holes in the leather. Nothing kept its gloss but the plume of white feathers which swayed above his head, and his bright sword and imperturbable good-humour.[d] But even this left him as he faced the almost certain defeat which a battle would mean. In August he wrote to Gabrielle d'Estrées: "The issue is with God. If I lose the battle thou wilt never see me again, for I am not one to flee nor to retreat."

But Parma's masterly generalship was more than a match for the king's chivalric courage. He relieved Paris after it had been reduced to the most awful straits. Two hundred thousand are said to have perished of hunger and disease. There were rumours that mothers devoured their own children; the Protestants had made merry over the fact that the one cheap thing in Paris was sermons; but such fanaticism was yet bound to conquer the king. The relief of Paris was a victory for the Spanish party which was growing stronger in the capital. In 1592 the same story was repeated at Rouen. Once more Parma outmanœuvred the king. But a wound in the hand received before Candebec was destined to prove fatal to the great Italian, and the conqueror of Antwerp withdrew to the Netherlands, and, then turning back, died in the harness at Arras, December 3rd, 1592.

Henry's fortunes revived with the fall of this redoubtable adversary.[a] He gathered all his forces for a last attempt upon Paris, and his enemies as usual played into his hands. Philip of Spain, who had united all classes and creeds of Englishmen in favour of Elizabeth by his insolent Armada, now was the creator of French union by his domineering conduct in France. Mayenne summoned a states-general at his request, and Philip there in no courteous terms stated his royal will; it was very short and very decisive — they were to accept his daughter as queen, that was all. A compromise was attempted; they would declare the duke of Guise king, and he should marry the infanta. Philip refused; his daughter should be queen in her own right, and then would marry Guise. Mayenne, who saw, whether it was king or queen, his pretensions were at an end, procured a resolution of the parliament of Paris, that "any sentence, decree, or declaration contrary to the Salic law, should be void and of non-effect." Whatever strengthened the Salic law and the direct succession was a vote on the side of Henry of Navarre.[d]

Henry IV and the League

The league was now divided into two parties, the Spanish League and the French League, who conspired incessantly, sometimes together, sometimes against one another, to promote their personal interests. But meantime the great national instinct was gradually winning France over to Henry's cause; men's eyes turned to him as the only one able to put an end to war at home and abroad, and to bring about national unity. The burning question of the day was, would Henry turn Catholic? Rumours were rife; the question was openly discussed. Such being the case, it was only to be expected that Henry would boldly face the question himself and lose no time in finding an answer.

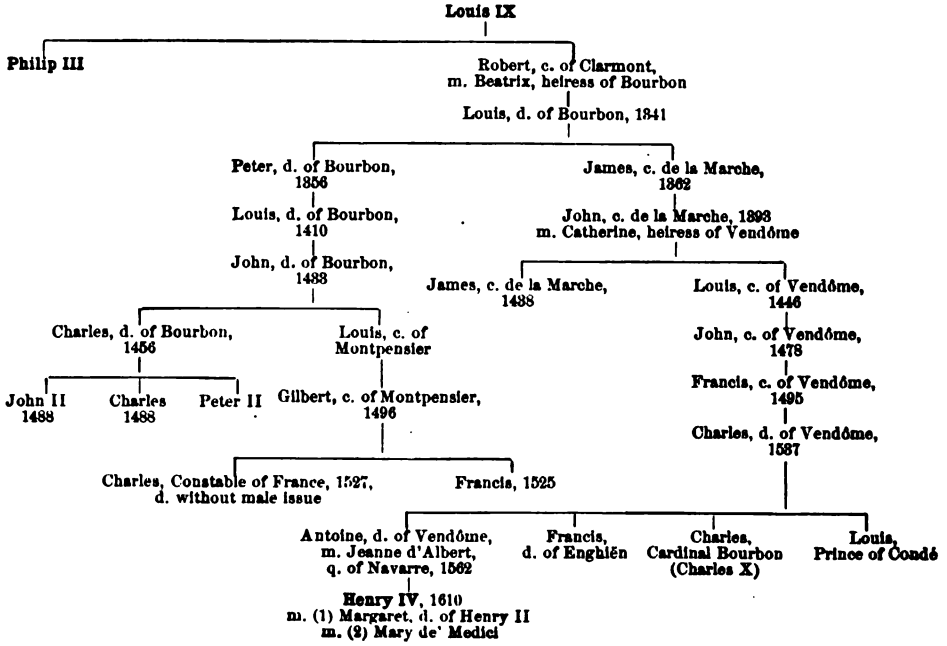
And this he found most puzzling, notwithstanding his broad and independent mind. It is M. Guizot's opinion that Henry's religious creed was not based on mature or deep conviction, but was rather the result of first

claims of his having been born in the reformed faith; and that it was a feeling of patriotism, a desire to save France from all the horrors of civil and religious wars, that decided him to abjure his religion. However that may be, he did so decide, and on the 16th of May, 1593, announced to his council his intention of becoming a Catholic. On July 15th, 1593, he assembled a conference of Catholic and Protestant divines at Mantes, and ten days after, on Sunday, July 25th, he solemnly abjured his Protestant creed at the church of St. Denis. Here then, says M. Guizot, was religious peace, a prelude to political reconciliation between the monarch and the great majority of his subjects. And now the Catholic Henry was crowned king of France,[1] the 27th of February, 1594.[a]

France has known few periods which can be compared to this time of Henry IV; few periods when she has been nearer to ruin and yet has raised herself from a state of terrible disturbance to one of glorious peace. A kingdom only just relieved from the exhaustion of prolonged strife, and threatened with downfall by the new religious doctrines; feuds which stir up struggles whose annals are stained by murder, and which are destined to end in a huge massacre; a crown rendered insecure by the claims of rival houses, and in turn making use of criminal measures as a means of vengeance or finding in them its own punishment; a prince whose birth seems to call him to the throne while his beliefs seem likely to deprive him of it forever; poverty, famine, the growing claims of the foreigner whose pretensions increase in proportion to the misfortunes of France; and in the midst of all these vicissitudes a nation which does not know where to look for help, nor in whose hands to trust its fate — what scenes! what years! what memories full of dark heroic grandeur!

The importance of contemporary events and the sombre majesty which seems to preside over all the actions of the league, make it difficult to pass

[1] THE HOUSE OF BOURBON



judgment on it. It presents, both as regards things and men, such striking contrasts, it has passed through so many different phases, and has included under one name so many motives entirely opposed to one another, that it would be impossible to criticise it from only one point of view. And yet what contrary opinions it has elicited! Some have praised, while others have condemned everything connected with it. It has been handed down as entirely faultless or utterly blameworthy.

But through all this confusion one thing is clear, and sums up the whole matter — namely, that the conversion of Henry IV was the triumph of the league and the ruin of its members. The law of France was not entirely on the side of Henry IV nor wholly in favour of his adversaries; it was divided. The accession of the king of Navarre placed in opposition two principles which had hitherto been united: hereditary monarchy, whose claims this prince represented; and the national religion, whose doctrines he did not profess. Can it be denied, unless we bring to bear on the examination of this period ideas which belong to a different age, that the union of monarchy and Catholicism had become a part of the constitution just as monarchy itself had? And had not the country some right to insist on the maintenance of this union, which was one of the first laws imposed on the sovereign? One thing remains certain, and that is that after the league this union was re-established, and peace along with it; that Henry IV, when he became king, recognised its existence by promising to be instructed in the faith; that, with rare exceptions, the best of the royalists, the bishops, those hundred bishops who so firmly supported him, the chief generals of his army, and his parliaments, continually referred to and called upon the king to remember this promise, either in the hope of attracting to him the members of the league, or of inducing him to embrace their religion; in short that France, exhausted, a prey to the horrors of civil war, and in danger of the Spanish yoke, did not rally round Henry IV till after his abjuration, but, that abjuration once pronounced, she unanimously declared in his favour.

Who can be astonished at this? Who could fail to understand that a nation accustomed to mingle its faith and its history, finding amongst its Catholic princes its greatest kings, and knowing nothing of the Protestants but the unhappy dissensions which were the result of persecution on the one side and revenge on the other, must hate the idea of seeing on the throne, which was the centre to which its dearest traditions clung, a representative of that belief which was destroying those very traditions? Was the promise of Henry IV to respect the Catholic religion a sufficient guarantee at that time, when party strife ran so high, when political law was on all sides confounded with religious law and had everywhere followed the vicissitudes of the latter, and when an instance of a king professing a different religion from that of the nation he ruled was unknown? And, as if to emphasise the apprehensions of the leaguers, did not England furnish them with an example of a nation which had changed its religion three times to suit the pleasure of three successive monarchs? This resolution to maintain the Catholic religion on the throne of St. Louis, regardless of all political considerations, was not the predominant idea of one party only: the whole of France was strongly imbued with it.

The league was responsible for more than this. How can we forget that besides inculcating the principle which it succeeded in rendering triumphant, the league was the moving spirit of many excesses, that it abolished beliefs, or used them as means to an end, as best suited its purpose; that it was responsible for the frenzied actions of the famous faction known as the Sixteen, of

which the very name is sufficient; that it appealed in turn to revolutionary and tyrannical theories; that it menaced the monarchy even before it had been threatened by the reform party; and that the result of this violent party feeling was to place before the nation the alternative that France must either have a Catholic king who was not legitimate or a legitimate king who was not a Catholic?

Of course the union of the two principles which constituted the monarchy found partisans and opponents in both camps. In both also there were many of those turbulent spirits who war against peace, who elevate hatred into a duty, and encourage strife on principle. Some of these exaggerated the rights of the king, others those of the pope; though they compromised the former by their violence, and disavowed their support of the latter by rising in rebellion when the king and the pope were reconciled to each other. In both camps also, wise and moderate men with a true understanding of religion and of France were advancing by different paths towards the same goal. Jeannin, Villeroi, and perhaps at certain moments the duke of Mayenne, were approaching the same goal as Luxemburg, the duke of Nevers, the bishop of Paris and the archbishop of Bourges. But the royalists had the good fortune to possess as their leader a prince who, personifying one of the two great principles, was soon to submit to the other; whilst the members of the league, divided against themselves, having no recognised head, in revolt against monarchic authority and yet having no special right to be considered as the representatives of the Catholic religion, lost ground by the want of consistency in their claims.[h]

The extravagant enthusiasm of the league had evaporated; in part it had been reasoned down by the mild and rational philosophy promulgated in the *Essays* of Montaigne,[i] and in part scouted by the poignant ridicule of the *Satire Ménippée.*[j] These are the two chief literary works of the epoch — the former sufficiently known to every reader, the latter one of the finest specimens of political satire to be found in any language. It proved to the leaguers what Hudibras proved to the English Puritans — it exposed the absurdity and hidden selfishness of fanaticism, and showed that ridicule might be made a more effectual weapon than the sword.[k]

Henry, in his negotiations with the clergy, had ignored the ultramontanes, who leaned on Spain, but dealt with the patriotic national clergy. Whether Henry said that Paris was worth a mass or not, — and the saying was in accord with his wit and his sincerity, — he had left off conversion until he could deal with effect directly with the people, and not play over into the hands of the high Catholic party. France was ready for the act. By the end of 1593 the most of the kingdom had declared for Henry; the centres which had been in opposition, Meaux, Orleans, and Bourges, and finally Lyons gave in, and in the winter of 1594 he was crowned at Chartres, — Rheims not having yet declared for him. The papal absolution had not yet arrived and the higher clergy was mostly hostile still. But in March Paris opened its gates and Henry went to mass at Nôtre Dame amid the riotous joy of the citizens.[a]

Opposition of the Pope and Philip II

The only two powers who now delayed the recognition of the king were the pope and Philip. The Catholic Henry availed himself of the Pragmatic which had conveyed the patronage of abbeys and bishoprics to the crown, and turned the tables on the holy father by employing the honours of the

church in pacifying the state. If a zealous leaguer still held back, hesitating to believe the sincerity of the conversion, he was convinced of the Catholicism of the most Christian king by the bestowal of the revenues of a vacant stall or rich deanery. Villars Brancas, a zealous papist and gallant soldier, who was governor of Rouen against the king, never gave credit to Henry's attachment to the church till he was presented with two or three abbacies for his own enjoyment. Rouen then opened its gates, and the military abbot did suit and service to his orthodox and discriminating patron. All the leaders were softened by the same arts, and at last Guise and Montmorency were admitted into favour. Guise, a disappointed opponent, was made governor of Provence; and Montmorency, a discontented supporter, received the constable's staff. Hatred, doubt, and bitterness of course lay for a long time in the hearts of the fanatical and ambitious. Clement VIII, the fifth pope who within four years had sat on the Roman throne, had not pronounced the absolution of Henry's previous unbelief, and a youth, a pupil of the Jesuits, imbued with their principles, if not incited in this instance by their advice, attempted the murder of the king. His knife slipped, and only inflicted a trifling wound; but the whole nation was awake to the indignity of the action. The university and parliament pronounced against the Jesuits, and they were ordered from the soil of France. Henry confessed the step was necessary, but it was not legal, and in a few years he revoked the sentence of banishment, and allowed the society to return.[d]

When the papal absolution came it was the sign of the end of the league, which collapsed when Mayenne made his peace early in 1596. The only revenge which the king allowed himself being, Sully[p] tells us, to lead him on a hot, tiresome tramp around the park of Soisson, which the gouty Mayenne must acquiesce in without grimace.[a]

Meantime Philip II refused to recognise the king of France under any other title than that of Prince of Béarn, and in other ways also showed his hostility. So in January, 1595, Henry formally declared war against Spain and a conflict began which lasted for three years. It is not worth while to follow step by step this monotonous conflict, pregnant with facts which had their importance for contemporaries but which are not worthy of an historical resurrection.[l] Several battles were fought, several towns submitted; Amiens surrendered in September, 1597, after a long siege, and with the fall of Amiens fell all the knights who had been raising their heads throughout France. The Peace of Vervins was signed May 2nd, 1598, four months before the death of Philip II. So the peace was made; and in it the aged sixteenth century seems to sink to rest. It closed the wounds of all that strife of three generations which began with the Reformation as a group of purely religious wars, and, after dreary epochs of civil contest, came to an end in which nothing was said as to matters of faith, an end heralded by the great Edict of Toleration.[m] A month previous to the signing of the treaty of peace Henry had signed and published the Edict of Nantes, defined by M. Guizot[l] as his treaty of peace with the Protestant malcontents. Hitherto there had never been anything but truces or armed neutrality.[a]

THE EDICT OF NANTES

The Edict of Nantes, in common with almost all measures which have been taken to redress grievances in times of disturbance, consisted of two distinct parts: one of temporary value and intended to meet the special

circumstances of the case, the other calculated to endure, and dictated by fixed principles. Much has been said about the excessive privileges granted by the Edict of Nantes to the Huguenots. This special organisation, giving them quite a peculiar position in the state; those two hundred towns, where they were to be secure from interference, and which were placed for a time in their hands; those places, strong enough to endure a siege and against which the whole of the royal forces were no more than adequate, given up to them — these, as Sully declared, were concessions quite incompatible with the security of any government, and when Cardinal Richelieu, after two civil wars, cut down these privileges without interfering with the Protestant religion, it became evident that they were not at all necessary to insure liberty of conscience.

The measures which did insure that liberty formed the very basis of the Edict of Nantes. They secured to the Huguenots the free practice of the reformed religion throughout the greater part of the kingdom, excepting certain towns belonging to the league, where the Calvinists had realised that it was better not to settle. They provided that Protestants should enjoy the same civil rights as Catholics, and the very law for depriving people of hereditary rights on account of religious opinions, which was to be formally promulgated in England against the Catholics, was as formally suspended in France with regard to the Protestants. Lastly, not to mention the less important clauses, a chamber was created in parliament called the chamber of the Edict, an allowance was granted to the Protestants for their ministers and their schools, and they were admitted to the dignities and offices of state.

The true spirit of the Edict of Nantes, temporarily obscured by the granting of the concessions which it enumerated, is contained in these latter clauses which granted toleration to the Protestants while depriving the Reformation movement of any political character whatever. At a time when sovereigns and people were in the habit of shielding their ambition and their crimes under the name of religion, Henry IV consistently tried, in his relations with foreign powers, as well as in his own kingdom, to separate the two orders, and to maintain civil unity in the midst of religious dissension; civil unity being in his eyes not only a pledge of peace, but the presage of a still higher unity.

Besides this tolerance granted to the Protestants, there is also an evident desire to encourage where it was possible a reconciliation with the church, and to put an end simultaneously to persecutions and to religious differences. He had seen that persecution, far from destroying opposition, only tended to excite it, and that the persecution itself, by a sort of reaction, tended to become more virulent. He expressed this with striking eloquence in the parliament of Paris, saying: "After St. Bartholomew four of us who were playing with dice at a table saw drops of blood appear there, and finding that after they had been wiped away twice they returned a third time I said I would play no more; and that it was a bad omen against those who had shed it; M. de Guise was one of the party." He had said elsewhere: "It is a clear proof of unreasonable excitement to begin the work of conversion by subversion, of instruction by destruction, by extermination, and by war, when one ought to begin by fraternity, admonition, and gentleness." Whilst granting these liberties to the Protestants, whilst further developing the significance of the Edict by ordering it to be enforced in Béarn and in the places where Catholics were in a minority, whilst he instanced his own example in order to protect the latter from the harshness of Protestant rulers, Henry turned his attention

to the church ; strove to satisfy her claims, to secure her liberty, and by so doing to insure her ascendency. "I know," he said to the clerical deputies in 1598, "that religion and justice are the pillars and the foundation of this kingdom, whose preservation depends on justice and piety ; and where these do not exist I wish to establish them, but little by little, as I wish to do everything. I will, God helping me, act in such a way that the church will be in as good a state as she was a hundred years ago. I hope to satisfy you and my own conscience." [k]

REORGANISATION OF FRANCE WITH THE AID OF SULLY

In 1598 Henry IV had driven out the foreigner, united Catholic and Protestant, and finally established peace in his domestic and in his foreign relations. It was now necessary to heal France from all the blows she had received. "I have hardly a horse on which I could fight," wrote Henry in 1596 : "my doublets have holes at the elbows and my pot is often empty." The country was in a like condition. A contemporary estimated that, since 1580, 800,000 persons had perished by wars and massacres, that nine cities had been razed, 250 villages burned, 128,000 houses destroyed. And since the period preceding the league, what fresh ruin ! Workmen without work, commerce interrupted, agriculture ruined, brigandage everywhere — that was the condition from which Henry must raise France. The nobility had proposed to him a means to get out of this distress ; they offered him all the money necessary for the government and the maintenance of the army on the sole condition of a decree "that those who held governments by appointment might hold them as their property upon acknowledging them to be from the crown by simple liege homage, a thing that was formerly practised." This thing formerly practised was precisely what royalty had incessantly been destroying piece by piece for two centuries, and Henry IV was less disposed than any of his predecessors to restore feudalism. On the contrary, it was by withdrawing France from the hands of these "tyrants" in order to govern it himself that he undertook to regenerate it.

Henry had already found the man who was to aid him in this work which was more difficult than that of the battle-field ; a man of strong good sense, intrepid heart, and withal a wise mind, the Protestant Maximilian de Béthune, later duke of Sully. Born at the château of Rosny, near Mantes, in 1560, he was seven years younger than the king. At the time of St. Bartholomew he was studying at Paris. He attached himself to the king of Navarre and followed him in all his adventures and his battles, showing himself as brave as any. He was often wounded, for example at Ivry, whence he was borne apparently dying, when the king met him and "embraced him with both arms" as "a brave soldier, a true French knight." Not a knight, however, after the paladins of romance, for though he attended well to the affairs of his master, he did not forget his own. He married a rich heiress, a Courtenay. He did not disdain the profits of war, the pillage of cities or the ransom of captives, nor even the profits of business ; he bought horses at a low price in Germany and sold them in Gascony for a high price. Increasing his fortune in every honest fashion, he established order in his own house as he did in the public finances. But, devoted to the prince and to the state, this good manager cut down his forest of Rosny to take the proceeds to Henry when the latter was at the end of his resources ; and the zealous Protestant advised the king to end the war by becoming a Catholic. Sully was neither a Colbert nor a Bayard; he had, however, some of the qualities of both. [n]

Sully introduced into the government the energy of a soldier, and into the prince's household the same economy and punctuality as prevailed in his own. Having become superintendent of finances, and having assumed the supreme direction of this department, he laid the traditions of method and of that perfect efficiency which cannot exist without it. He performed a very important, very difficult, but not very brilliant work. He formed men and trained them so that they could satisfactorily carry on existing institutions. By his unfailing watchfulness, he succeeded in having the accounts systematically kept, and rendered peculation almost impossible. As most of the hereditary financial offices had gradually acquired an independence which had been fostered by the civil wars, Sully tried to reunite, as far as they were concerned, the ancient ties of centralisation, so as to secure the influence of the supreme power over them. He also wished to have the census taken regularly, and to insure an accurate statement of the budget being drawn up. He wanted to find out the exact value of the taxes, and to institute a regular system for their collection; finally he took advantage of the low rate of interest to reduce the pensions paid by the state.

This change, and a better system for farming the taxes and of securing their returns enabled him to leave the ministry, having made up the deficit, and leaving several millions of savings in the cellars of the Bastille. This accumulation was very valuable at a period when there was hardly any better way of providing for future emergencies than by laying by money. Sully was the first superintendent of finance whose memory was not execrated, and even remained popular. Let us hear what is said of him in an anonymous eulogium, written probably after his death, and which, in spite of its somewhat obscure language, contains a true appreciation of his administrative powers: "He only, up to the present time, has discovered the connection between two things in the government of states, which our forefathers were not able to unite, and which they even considered incompatible: the amassing of wealth in the royal coffers, side by side with the diminution of taxation and increasing prosperity of the people: the increase of the king's wealth simultaneously with that of private individuals."

Sully called agriculture and cattle breeding the two feeders of France; he made a point of encouraging agriculture, the interests of which had already attracted attention in the sixteenth century, and he diminished the rates though he could not succeed in compelling the nobles to pay them in those provinces where the assemblies claimed the right of levying them. As for commerce and manufactures, he did not yet recognise their importance. He looked upon them simply as ministers to luxury, just as he saw nothing in luxury but the extravagance of individuals and the corruption of the public mind. Fortunately Henry IV, who did not share these very military prejudices, instituted an elective chamber of commerce, granted many facilities to manufactures which were taking root or seemed likely to take root in France, protecting them by fixing tariffs, commanded the most competent men to draw up memoranda on the economic interests of the country, created or rather tried to create an India company, and assumed the exclusive right of legislating in commercial matters—a right which had hitherto been claimed by the representatives of the provincial governments.

We owe to Sully the institution of two important administrations, one for public works by which many valuable enterprises were at once undertaken, such as the draining of marshy places, and the construction of canals; the other in connection with the mines, the working of which, having been granted as a monopoly to companies by Charles VI and Louis XI, had not

produced very good results. His reforms extended to almost every service. In the army responsibility and discipline were re-established, the stock of ammunition, artillery, etc., was augmented, the condition of the troops ameliorated, and provision made for the wounded and for veterans. The fifteen years of this ministry were too short, though much was effected during their course; Sully could not carry out all the plans he had conceived. The most important of these were to accustom the nobility to take part in business, to form a training school for statesmen in connection with the king's council, which would have insured the maintenance of traditions and made the carrying out of reforms much easier. He retired "satisfied," he said in his letter to Marie de' Medici, "with having by his industry and ingenuity succeeded in reducing to order the most terrible confusion which had ever existed in the finances of France." *b*

AMOURS AND SECOND MARRIAGE OF HENRY IV

Let us inspect another phase of the character of Henry of Navarre. Let us turn from the warrior and the reformer to the man and the lover.

Who has not heard of the fair Gabrielle? Henry saw her first at the château of her father, during one of his campaigns, and became enamoured. He frequently stole from his camp in disguise, and crossed the enemy's lines to visit her. A hundred stories are told of the romantic adventures he underwent whilst wooing. He won, and was happy. Never had illegitimate love a more flattering excuse. Compelled to espouse, when a boy, the abandoned sister of Charles IX, his wedding feast had been stained with the blood of his friend, and the dissolute Marguerite led a life such as might be expected from such a race and such espousals. Henry consoled himself in the affections of Gabrielle d'Estrées, whose society he loved, and to whom he was constant. She had borne him several children.

And now the wish of Henry was to obtain a divorce from his queen, and to sanction his connection with Gabrielle by a marriage. So serious and sincere was he in this that all his courtiers applauded the determination. Sully alone looked cold. Henry consulted him, and besought his advice; and the minister represented to him all the dangers of a disputed succession, of the pretensions of the young duke de Vendôme, who could not be legitimated, and of all the obvious objections to such a step. Henry was grieved: he saw the justice of the counsel, and remained irresolute. Gabrielle broke forth in invectives against Sully, and at length demanded his dismissal. Henry brought his minister by the hand into the apartment of Gabrielle, and entreated her to be reconciled to him. She persisted in her pride and in bursts of resentment. "Know, madam," said Henry, harsh for the first time, "that a minister like him must be dearer to me than even such a mistress as you." Gabrielle henceforth gave herself up to grief. The king was true and kind as ever. In the spring of the year 1599 she was advanced in a state of pregnancy. Henry, about to go through the pious ceremonies of Easter at Fontainebleau, felt it decorous to separate for a few days from his mistress. She retired to Paris, weighed down by despondency and the blackest presentiment. Astrological predictions were then the mode; and some imprudent or malevolent information of this kind tormented her: "We shall never meet again," were her words on parting from the king, and they proved true. She was taken with convulsions, delivered of a dead child, and expired in a few hours. Henry had mounted on horseback at the first news, and was halfway on the road to Paris, when he was told it was too late. The

brave Henry could not support this blow: he wellnigh fainted, and was obliged to be conveyed back to Fontainebleau. There he retired, and shut himself up to indulge his grief. Sully alone was able to console him, and rouse him, after a time, to the affairs of the kingdom.

It were to be wished, for Henry's character, that his amours had ended here. His intention was to marry; and the niece of the grand duke of Tuscany, Marie de' Medici, had already been mentioned. But the divorce had not yet been expedited by the pope; and the inflammable temperament of Henry took fire in the meantime with a new passion. Mademoiselle d'Entragues was the object, a being lovely indeed, but wanting alike the modesty, the sweet temper, and unambitious conduct of Gabrielle. She long enticed and tormented the monarch. Her father, the count d'Entragues, affected resentment and vigilance; and Henry had recourse to such disguise as he had formerly used to gain admission to Gabrielle d'Estrées. Henrietta d'Entragues had not the same taste: she is said to have so disliked the monarch in the humble dress of a gardener that she turned him from her presence. At length she obtained from Henry a promise of marriage in case that a son was born to her within the year, and Mademoiselle d'Entragues became marquise de Verneuil. Henry showed the contract to Sully, who, without other comment, tore and cast it under his feet. The king felt bound to write another; but in consequence of a stroke of lightning which fell on the house where the marquise resided, it ultimately became void. The fright which the lightning occasioned had the effect of destroying the hopes she had entertained of fulfilling her part of the contract, a stipulation indecent and unworthy of the monarch. Henry soon after was roused to a fuller sense of his dignity and of the nation's weal. A divorce was by this time obtained; and he espoused Marie de' Medici in the course of the year 1600.[k]

The duke de Bellegarde, a successful rival to Henry IV in the affections of several of his mistresses, had been sent by him to Florence to fetch the bride. The Tuscan princess, already twenty-seven years of age, had shown some inclination for gallantry. Paul Giordano Orsini, her first cousin, one of the nobles who accompanied her to the French court, was said to have inspired her with love. Concino Concini, grandson of a secretary of Cosmo, a young man of wit and pleasing appearance, but who had ruined himself by his licentiousness, came also in her train in search of fortune in France. With her also went Leonora Dori, a woman of low origin, remarkable for her slenderness and pallor, the daughter of a carpenter and of a woman of ill-fame. This woman, in attendance on the princess from her earliest infancy, had obtained a complete ascendency over her. Leonora had profited by her patronage to induce the noble Florentine house of Galigaï to bestow their name upon her. Marie gave her the post of tire-woman, destined by the king for a French lady. The new queen left Florence on October 13th, took ship at Leghorn for Marseilles, and proceeded from one festivity to another, until she arrived at Lyons on December 2nd.

It was not until December 9th that Henry, posting to Lyons, saw his queen for the first time. He was not greatly pleased with her stout figure, her round face, and her large, staring eyes. The queen had nothing endearing in her manner, nor was she of a cheerful disposition; she had no liking for the king, and did not pretend to show any; she did not propose to amuse or please him; her temper was peevish and obstinate. She had been brought up entirely according to the Spanish custom, and in the husband who appeared to her old and disagreeable she still suspected the relapsed heretic. Henry was detained at Lyons by the negotiations with Savoy, but the signing

of the treaty of peace taking place on January 17th, 1601, he posted to Paris the next day, to be near the marquise de Verneuil, who pleased him far more than the queen, possessing precisely the charms, vivacity, and gaiety that the latter lacked.

After the departure of the king, Marie de' Medici and all her court set forth for the capital; travelling by post, she only reached Paris on February 9th. The princess of Conti (Louise Marguerite de Lorraine) relates that the day of the queen's arrival in Paris, "the king bade the duchess de Nemours (the first lady of the household) fetch the marquise de Verneuil, and present her to the queen. The aged princess attempted to excuse herself from so doing, saying she would lose all credit with her mistress; but the king insisted, and ordered her to do his bidding, and that somewhat rudely, which was contrary to his usual courteous habits. She therefore conducted the marchioness to the queen who, greatly astonished at the sight of her, received her with much coldness; but the marquise de Verneuil, very bold naturally, talked so much and so familiarly that she finally succeeded in forcing the queen to discourse with her.



MARIE DE' MEDICI
(1573–1642)

"The king, tired of going two or three times a day to see the marquise, on perceiving that the queen had softened towards her, desired her to come to the Louvre where he had an apartment made ready for her. This, after some time, roused the jealousy of the queen, who had been entertained by several people with sayings of the marquise de Verneuil; who in truth, spoke of her freely enough and with little respect. The queen and the marquise were both enceinte, and the king seemed as if he did not know how to be on good terms with them both. He showed that respect to the queen to which her rank entitled her, but he was happier in the society of the marquise. Everyone wishing to please the king visited the latter, which was taken very ill by the queen. They dwelt so near one another as to be unable to avoid each other, and continual misunderstandings were the result."[g] Sully was more than once called in to quiet their domestic broils. The birth of a son, afterwards Louis XIII, occurred at Fontainebleau in 1601 to allay the fears of a disputed succession, and also contributed to bind Henry to his queen.[k]

The king, though so well-wishing, never thought of cutting down the expenses of the court. Yet the desolation of the country, due to the civil wars, was appalling. The highways were lost in weeds and brambles, and wolves preyed on the country in great bands. Taxes could not be raised, so that finally the king gave up trying to collect arrears and in 1598 he gave up the taxes of 1594 and 1595.[a]

INTRIGUES OF DE BIRON

Another obstacle to the security and happiness of the monarch lay in the intrigues of his grandees. The people gave him little trouble; the turbulence of the civic class was over: they were ashamed, as well as weary, of the long disorders of the league, and in no way sought to renew them. Satisfied by the mild and economical management of the revenue by Sully, they applauded so beneficent a power, and forgot, or regretted not, that it was absolute. None clamoured for the states-general; they made loyalty a part of their religion; and abandoned all doctrines of liberty and republicanism to the hated Huguenots, who professed them.

The nobles, who were the contemporaries of Henry, could not find the same repose: they had lived a life of turbulence and war; they had been bred in intrigue, and in all the excitement of contending parties; peace could not content them. Then the life of a camp had placed them on a kind of equality with their monarch, who had terminated the war by yielding up the administering authority in the provinces to the several grandees. He had compounded with them, as much as conquered them; and the Protestant nobles had taken a position of equal independence with that of the Catholics. The high aristocracy, in fact, that Francis I so prudently kept down, had reconstituted itself in the subsequent reigns. They now made a covert, but not less serious proposal to Henry, choosing the duke de Montpensier, a stripling and a prince of the blood, to be their spokesman on the occasion. This demand was no less than to re-establish the old feudal system, by allowing the present governors of provinces to hold them in fief, and transmit them to their descendants. Henry was not a monarch to tolerate such a demand; and his angry reply struck young Montpensier with terror. The grandees determined to win by union and force what gentler means could not obtain. They conspired, leagued with Spain, with the duke of Savoy, and even with England, endeavouring to excite a malcontent party. Protestants as well as Catholics joined in this: the duke de Bouillon at the head of one, the proud Épernon representing the other. Such, however, was Henry's power, and such his character for courage as well as promptitude, such, too, was the vigilance of Sully, that this intrigue could never be matured into a conspiracy. Henry's frank and amiable temper won over many; and he never proceeded to punish the guilty until he had used every gentle means to admonish, to pardon, and recall them to duty.

The marshal De Biron was almost the only one of his nobles who still persisted in treasonable views. The king, on one occasion, had summoned him, charged him seriously, but not severely, with the crime, and showed him that he was well informed of his intrigues. Biron fell on his knees, confessed his weakness, but vowed that he would never more forsake the path of loyalty. Henry pardoned and embraced him. But Biron, vain and fickle, jealous even of his monarch's fame, was weak enough to listen once more to the insinuations of Spain. The duke of Savoy, on a visit to Henry, manifested every sign of admiration for the king, while he occupied himself in corrupting the French courtiers, and in fomenting a party. He was ably seconded by the Spanish count de Fuentes. Biron was fascinated by the mighty promises of these intriguers: he was to have Burgundy as an independent state. The constable de Bourbon himself never received more magnificent promises. Nothing more displays the baseness and declension of the Spanish monarchy than its recourse to such weak and dishonourable machinations.

[1602 A.D.]

Henry soon after, wearied with the bad faith and subtle subterfuges of the duke of Savoy, made war on that prince. Biron was intrusted with the command, and in conducting it his treachery became manifest. One day, when Sully rode with him to view the siege of a fortress belonging to the duke, the former could perceive that the fire from the ramparts slackened, and was directed from them. Sully took the same ride alone on the following day, and was received with a heavy and well-directed cannonade. It afterwards appeared that the marshal had intended to entice the king into an ambuscade, where the fire of the enemy would have certainly proved fatal. The duke of Savoy, worsted by the arms of Henry, made his submission, and obtained peace. Biron continued his intrigues with Spain, in concert with the duke de Bouillon, with the count d'Auvergne, bastard of Charles IX, and probably with Épernon, and the whole body of the malcontent noblesse.



CHARLES DE GONTAUT, DUC DE BIRON
(1562–1602)

The king was perfectly aware of these intrigues. Biron was betrayed by his chief counsellor and instigator, a person named Lafin. Henry saw Biron once talking with Lafin, and warned him, saying, "I know that man; he will lead you into evil." But the marshal was deaf to advice. Henry did not at first place much credit in the revelations of Lafin, who accused Sully himself among others of the court. But the informer produced written documents, proofs of Biron's connection with Spain. Biron was summoned to court. It was the king's intention to reproach his ancient comrade, to endeavour to awaken his loyalty, shame him into a confession of his treason, and again pardon him. Sully received instructions to pursue the same conduct, and to try every means short of letting the marshal know that Lafin had confessed all. Biron and the count d'Auvergne came to court boldly. Henry drew the traitor apart, led him into familiar conversation, showed himself open, frank, forgiving, yet suspicious. Biron betrayed no misgivings, no repentance, no wish to remove his sovereign's distrust. At last, as they arrived before an equestrian statue of Henry lately erected, which was ornamented with trophies, the king asked, "What would the king of Spain say were he to see me thus?" Biron, who felt that this was meant to try him, insolently replied, "Sire, he scarcely fears you." Then correcting himself, he stammered out, "I mean in that statue, not in this, your person." Henry smiled sorrowfully, and gave up his merciful and friendly purpose. Sully, on his side, exerted himself to the same effect, but in vain. Biron was hardened. It was only then that Henry gave orders for his arrest, and that of the count d'Auvergne. As they left the king's chamber, their swords were demanded. They were conveyed by water to the arsenal. Biron was tried before the parliament,

condemned, and executed. He evinced the greatest rage on the scaffold; it amounted to frenzy, and was excited by his horror of so disgraceful a death. The executioner was obliged to hide his sword, and strike off the head of the culprit unawares.

THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY'S REIGN

The last years of Henry's reign are scarcely marked by any important incidents. The few that did take place, such as the conspiracy of the family D'Entragues, and the weaknesses into which Henry's amorous disposition led him, are exaggerated in importance, and narrated by historians with a detail they little merit. The punishment of Biron, which Henry meant as a warning to his discontented nobles, succeeded in keeping them in awe. If they intrigued, it was in fear, and with a caution that marred all progress or purpose. The count d'Auvergne alone, though pardoned for being implicated with Biron, renewed his schemes in conjunction with the marquise de Verneuil; this mistress treated the king with the capriciousness and severity which a wronged beauty might use towards a gallant more advanced in years; the monarch construed her caprice into infidelity; and a loving quarrel grew to be a serious misunderstanding. Henry withdrew the written document of the promise of marriage. The father and daughter, joined by the count d'Auvergne, plotted against the king, it was said against his life; and, as usual, they found support in a Spanish emissary. They were all three arrested, tried, and condemned to death; but Henry pardoned his mistress, as well as her relatives, and commuted their punishment into exile. The restless and false D'Auvergne was confined permanently in the Bastille.

Squabbles with his queen, Marie de' Medici, on account of her Italian favourites, Concini and his wife; distrust of Sully, excited by the envious courtiers; these, with national improvements, negotiations, festivals, and hunting parties, bring the reign of Henry IV nearly to its close.

In 1609, its happy and glorious monotony was varied by the enthusiastic admiration which the aged monarch conceived for Mademoiselle de Montmorency, the young and lovely daughter of the constable, who had just appeared at court and eclipsed all its beauties. There is some difference of opinion as to the nature of Henry's admiration: the memoir writers of the age saw scandal in every connection; and certainly Henry's past life and his known failings incline to the worst side. Bassompierre,[o] then a young man, relates that he himself became a suitor for the beauty's hand, and that he was induced by the entreaties or commands of the enamoured king to desist. Bassompierre was a babbler, however, whose vanity breaks out in the arrogance of the mere pretension. The young prince of Condé was also smitten, but shrank back from so formidable a rival as the monarch. What belies the account of Bassompierre is that Henry came forward, and assured Condé that he might woo in all confidence, and that he had nothing to fear on that score from his king. If Henry had licentious views, Bassompierre, and not Condé, would have been the convenient husband of Mademoiselle de Montmorency.

Condé was the successful suitor, and the marriage was celebrated at court with unusual splendour. Henry, having given his word to the prince, indulged his predilection for the lovely bride by showering presents and favours upon her and her husband. The court, full of the malevolent, amongst whom the followers of the jealous queen were not the least forward, construed all these symptoms to be the homage of a guilty passion: they poured this in the prince's ear; and Condé, alarmed for his wife's

honour, carried her off from the court by stealth, first to Picardy, whence, on receiving a summons from the king to return, he made a second flight, and gained the Low Countries. The king showed himself strangely affected by this incident: the discovery of Biron's conspiracy did not cause him more trouble. Sully was called up in the night; and the whole court was roused by the agitation of the monarch, who was pacing and stamping up and down the chamber of the queen, while the courtiers stood "pasted to the walls," says Sully, lest they should interrupt the monarch's passion. The flight of the first prince of the blood, and his taking refuge with the Spaniards, was certainly a grave question, love and jealousy being set aside. The king demanded Sully's advice, who hesitated, but being forced, advised him to "do nothing." "Nothing!" said Henry; "call you that advice?" Sully replied that the escape of the prince was a matter of little importance, unless the king chose to make it important by raising a clamour, and showing that he took an interest concerning it. Henry, however, was not in a humour to treat the matter thus slightly and thus wisely: he instructed his ambassador to demand of the archduke to deliver up the prince and princess of Condé; and, as Sully foresaw, the court of Brussels, in refusing, filled Europe with calumnies against Henry; asserting that he wanted to take by force the wife of the first prince of the realm and of the blood. When Henry, immediately afterwards, menaced war, the outcry was that Europe was about to be deluged in blood for another Helen.

It was, indeed, unfortunate that Henry, who had remained so many years at peace, no doubt preparing and amassing the materials and resources of war, and cautiously awaiting fit pretext and proper reason, should now draw the sword for a cause at once criminal and absurd.[k]

Grand Design of Henry IV; His Death

At home the rest of Henry's reign was perhaps monotonous; but it was none the less momentous, for on the ruins of France the Bourbon monarchy was already building up the centralised absolutism which it was the work of Richelieu to perfect and Louis XIV to wield. But in foreign affairs the schemes of Henry were not less far reaching. France was to become the centre of European politics, the dictator of Germany. In Sully's *Economies Royales* we may read of the details of the great scheme which anticipated that of Napoleon by two centuries. But such details are the work of subsequent addition and the plan of making Europe into a grand republic of fifteen states with well-balanced interests, etc., was perhaps not so clearly conceived even by Sully as historians have been accustomed to state. But some such design was undoubtedly behind the foreign policy which Henry was inaugurating at his death. He possibly intended to unite with France the Flemish, Dutch, and North German states in a movement that would overthrow Spain and Austria. His own statements make this plain.[a]

Henry IV had expressed on many occasions and had incessantly repeated in his diplomacy the end which he had in view. His object was to restore the cities and states of the empire to their former rights and liberties, to assure the liberty of the United Provinces, to base the politics of France upon the alliance of the secondary states, in the north the United Provinces, Denmark, Sweden, and the German principalities, in the south, Switzerland, Savoy, and the Italian principalities; finally to extend his system of religious tolerance so as to guarantee liberty everywhere to the dissenters from the established cult, whether these dissenters might be Catholics, Lutherans, or

Calvinists; and to prevent religious wars or religious pretexts assigned to purely political wars and enterprises. He had long since declared to all the courts of Europe that he had ended the era of civil war in France and wished to end it everywhere else.

However it may be as to these observations, France, according to him, must pursue a double end in her foreign relations, lay the foundations of perpetual peace, and drive the Turks from Europe. In order to bring about perpetual peace it would be necessary to reduce the possessions of Austria, establish a certain balance of power, and create periodical diets or congresses, either for this or that category of states or for all Europe, with federal armies and fleets to execute the decisions made in common.[b]

He now resolved to realise his dream: but this, which had been a vision of heroism and philanthropy, was now degraded and sullied by the immediate motive. Henry, who was passionately fond of glory, saw the stain that was to rob his achievements of their brightness and purity. The accusation of the Spaniards troubled him: perhaps there was even truth in the reproach that the love of a sexagenarian king for a princess, and a married princess of twenty, was the only cause and pretext for convulsing Europe and shedding its best blood. This weighed upon Henry, and fretted him: his gaiety disappeared. Remorse and mortification came to cloud the heaven of his declining days. A dark presentiment, similar to that which had forewarned his loved Gabrielle of her fate, now gathered around Henry: he could not shake it off.

He intended leaving the queen as regent during his absence at the head of his army; and her previous coronation, a ceremony that had not yet taken place, was considered requisite. This detained him in the capital; and Marie de' Medici, fond of state and ceremony, insisted on it, and delighted in it. Henry was annoyed and fretted: he frequently said he should never leave Paris alive, and he longed to contradict his presentiment. The coronation of the queen at length took place. On the following day, the 14th of May, 1610, he manifested strong feelings of despondency. Despatches brought him word that his enemies were making no preparations for defence, and that they gave out that the delivery of the prince and princess of Condé would at once allay his choler and arrest his schemes. This increased his ill humour: he called for Sully; but learning that his minister was ill at the arsenal, the king's coach was ordered to convey him thither. Seven of the suite occupied with the king his ample carriage. The duke d'Épernon was in one corner, and Henry next to him. The vehicle proceeded, but was stopped in the narrow rue de la Ferronnerie by two loaded carts. This was the moment chosen by an assassin, Ravaillac, who, mounting on the step, and leaning full into the carriage, struck the king with a poniard, first in the stomach, and then in the breast. One of these stabs pierced the heart of the noble Henry.

To paint the rage and despair of the people would be impossible. The once detested Henry had won every heart; and the general grief for him partook of the character of madness. Tears were the least tokens of sorrow; many died on learning the catastrophe, amongst others the brave De Vic, the comrade of Henry. The lifeless body was borne to the Louvre, whilst Ravaillac, who made no attempt to escape, was taken, brandishing his dagger, and only preserved by the guards from being instantly torn in pieces. He had been a monk, strongly imbued with the king-killing principles that the Jesuits had broached. His crime had long been meditated by him; but no proof exists that he had been instigated either by Spain or by any knot

of malcontent courtiers. Suspicion, indeed, has scattered its stain on all with an unsparing hand. Épernon, the queen, Concini, and many others, were accused as being privy to the deed; and the record of Ravaillac's trial having been destroyed, whilst these personages possessed the chief influence, gives some colour to the charge. But the tortured culprit might idly or malevolently cast imputation on the powerful, as indeed he menaced to do. For when some one pressed him to name his accomplices, Ravaillac answered, "Suppose I name you." The seed of his crime was the diabolical maxim to which the fanaticism of the league had given birth, and which it had rendered popular. It had germinated and grown in the dark solitude of a rancorous and fanatic spirit.[k]

CHARACTER AND POLICY OF HENRY IV

There are two Henry IV's; the Henry of tradition and the Henry of history. The one more heroic and, thanks to Voltaire,[q] more popular; the other, underneath his crafty good nature, much more able and, with his pliant character, much better fitted to raise a falling edifice than a simple character would have been. Henry of Navarre had the most brilliant bravery, a quality common to the warriors of that time and of all times. But it is pleasing in a prince, and the chief who is ever ready to offer his life to the sword point is sure to win his soldiers' hearts. Reared among the mountaineers of the Pyrenees, he possessed an agility equal to theirs and a body incapable of fatigue. The vicissitudes through which he had passed had made his religion uncertain. Charles IX said to him, "Death or the mass!" He took the mass; later he abjured, and this abjuration was not to be the last. So he felt no anger against those who professed a different doctrine; his nature made fanaticism odious to him, and his position imposed tolerance upon him. Furthermore, he was a good comrade, showing the same face to good or to ill fortune. He bent under misfortune but did not break, and found resources in the most desperate situations. He loved pleasure, but not as it was loved by Henry III. He was kind through good nature as well as experience of life. He had friends who, it is true, got from his friendship more good words than good results; but his heart was open if his hand was closed, because he was for twenty years the chief of a party obliged to give much and to take nothing except from the enemy.

One night when D'Aubigné[e] and La Force were sleeping not far from the king, the former complained bitterly to the latter of their master's stinginess. La Force, overcome by fatigue, did not listen. "Don't you hear?" asked D'Aubigné. La Force roused himself and asked what he was saying. "Why, he is telling you," cried the king, who heard everything, "that I am a harsh, miserly fellow and the most ungrateful mortal on the face of the earth." "He did not treat me worse on account of it," adds D'Aubigné, "but he did not give me a quarter of a crown more."

His forced residence at the court of the Valois had been fatal to his morals. For several years he forgot his rôle and his fortune. After the death of the duke of Anjou, Duplessis-Mornay wrote to him: "Pastimes are no longer in season. It is time for you to make love to France." Henry felt this rebuke; he gave up his pleasures and put on his cuirass.[n]

In Sully's *Mémoires* we find this description of him[1]: "Such was the tragical end of a prince, on whom Nature, with a lavish profusion, had

[1 It must be recalled that Sully's estimate is that of a comrade in arms and a counsellor. It is a flattering tribute rather than a calmly judicious one.]

bestowed all her advantages, except that of a death such as he merited. I have already observed that his stature was so happy, and his limbs formed with such proportion, as constitutes not only what is called a well-made man, but indicates strength, vigour, and activity; his complexion was animated; all the lineaments of his face had that agreeable liveliness which forms a sweet and happy physiognomy, and perfectly suited to that engaging easiness of manners which, though sometimes mixed with majesty, never lost the graceful affability and easy gaiety so natural to that great prince. With regard to the qualities of his heart and mind, I shall tell the reader nothing new by saying that he was candid, sincere, grateful, compassionate, generous, wise, penetrating.

"He loved all his subjects as a father, and the whole state as the head of a family; and it was this disposition that recalled him even from the midst of his pleasures to the care of rendering his people happy and his kingdom flourishing; hence proceeded his readiness in conceiving, and his industry in perfecting, a great number of useful regulations. Many I have already specified; and I shall sum up all by saying that there were no conditions, employments, or professions to which his reflections did not extend; and that with such clearness and penetration, that the changes he projected could not be overthrown by the death of their author, as it but too often happened in this monarchy. It was his desire, he said, that glory might influence his last years and make them at once useful to the world and acceptable to God; his was a mind in which the ideas of what is great, uncommon, and beautiful seemed to rise of themselves: hence it was that he looked upon adversity as a mere transitory evil, and prosperity as his natural state.

"I should destroy all I have now said of this great prince if, after having praised him for an infinite number of qualities well worthy to be praised, I did not acknowledge that they were balanced by faults, and those, indeed, very great. I have not concealed, or even palliated his passion for women; his excess in gaming; his gentleness often carried to weakness; nor his propensity to every kind of pleasure: I have neither disguised the faults they made him commit, the foolish expenses they led him into, nor the time they made him waste; but I have likewise observed (to do justice on both sides) that his enemies have greatly exaggerated all these errors. If he was, as they say, a slave to women, yet they never regulated his choice of ministers, decided the destinies of his servants, or influenced the deliberations of his council. As much may be said in extenuation of all his other faults. And to sum up all, in a word, what he has done is sufficient to show that the good and bad in his character had no proportion to each other; and that since honour and fame have always had power enough to tear him from pleasure, we ought to acknowledge these to have been his great and real passions."[p]

Martin's Estimate of Henry IV

The whole reign of Henry IV, after the Peace of Vervins, had been but a preface; the half-opened book is closed forever! All the past glory of the Béarnais would have been eclipsed by the magnificent results that his policy had prepared and that his arms were to realise. In spite of the exertions and the excesses of his life his robust constitution still promised him some years of military activity, enough without doubt to make sure if not of the complete triumph, at least of the predominance of his European system; his heirs would have done the rest! The politics of France, allied with the Protestants without being absorbed by Protestantism, triumphing by the aid

of the entire foreign and French Reformation, would have been started beyond recall upon the paths of international equity, intellectual liberty, and religious tolerance. Henry IV would have made splendid reparation for the faults of Francis I and himself. He would not have abjured Catholicism, but with his victorious sword he would have obliterated his coronation oath and the humiliation of Roman absolution. Germany would not have seen the Thirty Years' War, nor France the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The seventeenth century would have had all its glory without its fatal errors.

God did not grant it him! Henry IV bore to the tomb not only the European system which he intended to inaugurate but all the elements of order and power that he had given to his country. France fell from the height to which he had raised her, until the day when a powerful genius came anew to bring order into chaos and to revive in part the policy of Henry, but under much less favourable conditions. This genius was that of an individual, not that of a king, and Henry IV has remained the greatest and above all the most French of the kings of France; not again has there been seen on the throne a soul so national, an intellect so liberal. No one ever felt better than he the true destiny of France. It is not without reason that the popularity of Henry has increased with the growth of the modern spirit; it is not without reason that the eighteenth century tried to make him the epic hero of French history. The labouring classes have never forgotten the king who was to them the most sympathetic in manners and in heart, the king who occupied himself most seriously with the interests of the soil and of labour. Thinkers will never cease to honour in him the forerunner of a new Europe, the just and profound mind whose diplomatic plans are to-day in many respects the politics of the most enlightened men, and finally the champion and martyr of the most sacred of liberties, that of conscience.[c]

Having listened thus to a contemporary and to a modern French estimate of the great ruler, let us take a parting glance at him through the eyes of a scarcely less appreciative English historian.[a]

STEPHEN'S CHARACTERISATION OF HENRY IV AND HIS TIMES

It has been said of Henry IV [says Sir James Stephen], with equal truth and force, that he was l'Hôpital in arms. The principles which had been asserted by the wisdom and the eloquence of the great chancellor became triumphant by the foresight and the conquests of the great king. In an age of wild disorder and overwhelming calamity, he was raised up to restore his kingdom to affluence and to peace. He appeared to rescue his Protestant subjects from the tyranny which had so long denied to them the freedom of conscience. He came to give a firm basis to the national policy, and to open to his people at large a new direction, and a wider scope, for the martial energies by which they had hitherto been at once so highly, and so ineffectually, distinguished. For these high offices he was qualified by great talents, and by many virtues. With a capacity large enough to embrace all the social, military, and political interests of his dominions, he combined that practical good sense and flexibility of address, without which there is no safe descent from the higher regions of thought to the real business of life. The intuitive promptitude, and the enduring stability, of his resolutions attested at once his large experience in affairs, and his wide survey both of the resources at his command, and of the contingencies to which

he was exposed. He possessed that kind of mental instinct which advances by the shortest path to what is at once useful and possible, and which turns aside, with unhesitating decision, from any illusive and impracticable scheme. Never was a great innovator more characterised by practical wisdom; and never did such wisdom assume a more attractive aspect. His manners exhibited all the graces of his native land in their most captivating form. Delighted with his bonhommie, his gaiety, and his frankness, his subjects not only forgave his vices, but even found in them a fascination the more. They smiled at the scandalous amours of their gallant monarch as a not unbecoming tribute paid by human greatness to human infirmity. If they looked with awe on the desperate valour of his enterprises, on the inflexible rigour of his discipline, or on the soaring ambition of his political designs, they were reconciled to the stern character of the prince by the ever-flowing and genuine sensibilities of the man. If his lofty sense of his personal and ancestral dignity sometimes gave an austere aspect to his intercourse with his people, that pride of birth did but enhance the charm of his quick sympathy with the feelings and interests of the meanest of them. And, above all the rest, every Frenchman loved and admired in Henry the lover and admirer of France; and became patriotically blind to the faults of his renegade, and debauched, but still patriot, king.



COSTUMES OF THE TIME OF HENRY IV

And even now, when the spell is broken, and we may look back on the life of Henry IV with judicial impartiality, and reprobate the apologies which would have elevated his crimes into virtues, we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that he conferred on his people benefits which well entitled him to their lasting gratitude.

For, first, Henry of Navarre was the founder of religious toleration in France. Until the Edict of Nantes there had been many truces, but no real

peace, between the adherents of Rome and the followers of Calvin. To compel all the fragments of the Christian church to coalesce into one body, each member of which should hold the same opinions, and worship under the same forms, had been the inflexible policy of all his predecessors. To acquiesce in their separation, and yet to maintain each section in the nearest possible approach to an equality both of civil and religious privileges, was the no less inflexible design of Henry. His charter could not, indeed, restore unity to the church, but it established, on what seemed a secure basis, the unity of the state. The two religions were thenceforward placed under ecclesiastical laws widely differing from each other, but under a civil law common to them both.

The second great praise of the first of the Bourbon line is that of having rescued France from the abyss of bankruptcy and financial ruin in which it had been involved by the improvidence of the house of Valois. For the completion of that great work the larger share of honour is, indeed, due to Sully. But from his own *Economies Royales* we sufficiently learn that, unaided by the magnanimity, the self-denial, and the affection of the king, not even the zeal, the courage, and the sagacity of the great minister would have accomplished that herculean labour.

The third title of Henry to the place which he has ever held among the benefactors of France, has at all times been acknowledged by Frenchmen with more enthusiasm than any other of his services. He was the first of her kings who had at once the discernment to perceive how high a station belonged to her in the European commonwealth, and the energy to devise the methods by which that rank might be effectually vindicated.

It is not, however, on these grounds alone, that the reign of Henry IV occupies a memorable position in the constitutional history of his country. It was a period of great consummations and of great beginnings. Like some inland sea, which is at once the receptacle of many converging, and the source of as many diverging, streams, it was interposed between two eras strikingly contrasted with each other. It marked the close of the mediæval sovereignty, and the commencement of the modern monarchy, — the first a dominion of undefined rights, of unsettled habits, and of a fluctuating policy, — the second, a government absolute in fact and in right, severely consistent in its arbitrary principles, but elaborately adapted to the various exigencies of a civilised commonwealth. The hitherto unorganised elements of the state were now, for the first time, reduced into a political unity. The invidious distinctions of earlier times now began to give place to social equality; and the slow, though steadfast, progress of that unity and of that equality may be considered as the subject of the whole of the subsequent history of France. In the triumph of these two principles consists the peculiar distinction, and the chief boast, of the French policy, whether monarchical or republican, of later times; and, therefore, the age of Henry IV when considered as the origin of these great national characteristics, demands, and will repay, the most diligent attention.[r]



CHAPTER XV

THE LITERARY PROGRESS OF FRANCE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

> "It is in Rabelais, in the satire of Ménippée, and in Montaigne that we shall find principles of social justice, ideas of reformation, expressed with as much profundity as eloquence; in these writers they are scattered, hidden under buffoonery in Rabelais, tempered by philosophical *insouciance* in Montaigne; but they bear witness to the extent to which the study of antiquity, the religious struggles, and the civil war had set political ideas in motion. The great history of the President de Thou marked in the highest degree the spirit of legal freedom under the monarchy. Calvin had been the despotic legislator of a democracy, yet the Reformation everywhere raised the questions of civil liberty involved in the question of religious liberty; and as the governments of the Middle Ages owed their origin to the church the political innovators owed theirs to dissenting theologians." — VILLEMAIN.[b]

WHILE we have followed the fortunes of Henry of Navarre another century has been rounded out. Almost a hundred years have passed since Francis I came to the throne; more than half a hundred since that monarch laid down the sceptre. It has been a troublous epoch for France as we have seen: a time of foreign and civil wars that would have disrupted a less stable civil organisation. Yet the new forces of the Renaissance and the Reformation were making themselves felt throughout this period, and, as so often happens, the time of military strife has been also a time of social development. Some phases of this development we have studied, particularly in connection with the reign of Francis I; it remains to mention in some detail the work of three great writers who made this century memorable in French literary annals. We have already cited a comment of Villemain on the retardation of the French literary Renaissance. How marked this retardation was will be even more evident when we reflect that the century which has just been rounded out saw Italian culture in its decadence, and that the immediate period of Henry IV is precisely contemporary with the age of Elizabeth in England, — the time of Bacon, Ben Jonson, and Shakespeare; whereas French literature is only at its beginnings. Notable beginnings

these are however, for the names that we now have to chronicle are those of Rabelais, of Calvin, and of Montaigne. It is true that Stephen, whom we quote now somewhat in extenso, cites this trio as the second great literary triumvirate of France ; having named Joinville, Froissart, and Comines as the great triumvirate of an earlier period. In the widest view this classification no doubt is just ; yet it can hardly be asserted that these earlier chroniclers are classic in the same sense as are Rabelais and Montaigne. The earlier writers are preserved more for their method than for their manner ; and it is only work in which literary form takes precedence over mere fact that can be classified on the highest plane of art. According to this standard, the work of Calvin scarcely belongs beside that of Rabelais and Montaigne ; yet a study of French literary development in the sixteenth century from which that work was omitted would be obviously incomplete. Let us glance then at the work of these three greatest French writers of the sixteenth century, between whom, as Sir James Stephen asserts "the parallelisms are as remarkable as the contradictions." Taking them in the order of time we have first to consider the great humourist Rabelais, mention of whose work has already been made when we were speaking of the French Renaissance of the middle of the century.[a]

Rabelais, the son of an innkeeper at Chinon, was born at that place in the year 1483.[1] He became a Franciscan friar, a deacon, and a priest in holy orders; and then, at the mature age of forty-two, commenced the study of medicine in the college at Montpellier. Various medical treatises were the fruit of those labours; and the reputation derived from them was sufficient to obtain for him the office of physician to the public hospital at Lyons. But his professional books proving unsaleable, Rabelais, to indemnify his bookseller, wrote and published his *Pantagruel*, or *Chronique Gargantuine*, of which (as he says) more copies were sold in two months than of the Bible in ten years. Having thus discovered the secret of his power, he next produced the *Gargantua;* the work which has secured for him the admiration of all subsequent ages, though the reverence of none. It is a romance in which Rabelais may be considered as depicting the habits, opinions, errors, crimes, and follies of that age of religious and intellectual revolutions, in the centre of which he lived. Yet the critics have doubted, and must ever continue to doubt — whether Gargantua and his son Pantagruel are actual portraits of those who led the armaments (literary, theological, or military) of those times, or are mere impersonations of those abstract qualities by which the world was then governed — whether Panurge and Friar John had any living prototypes amongst the men of the sixteenth century — or whether the one is but a name for mediocrity, ceasing to be honest as it becomes conspicuous ; and the other a name for sensuality, rescued from contempt by a shrewd and jovial spirit. But why investigate these and such other riddles, proposed by their author in avowed defiance of any such attempt? Why, indeed, read at all a book of which not only the general scope, but almost every page is enigmatical ? Why squander time and patience on a writer who, of set purpose, makes his readers dependent on the guidance of some dull and doubtful commentator? For those passages which do

[1 The date of Rabelais' birth is not certain, although most authorities place it about 1483. Of his early years very little is known, but from 1519 his history is more definite. He was educated at a convent school and, after his entrance into the Franciscan order, devoted himself to serious study. In 1524 he became a Benedictine, this change of order and dwelling-place being attributed by some to a disgust with the cloister. Six years later he is found studying medicine in Montpellier and afterwards practising in Lyons. John du Bellay, bishop of Paris, took him with him to Rome in 1534 as physician. Rabelais died at Paris in 1553.]

reward the toil of the student are separated from each other, not only by this profound obscurity, but by foul abysses of impurity, which no skill or caution can always succeed in overleaping. I know not how to describe them in terms at once accurate and decorous, except by borrowing Mr. Carlyle's denunciation of a work of Diderot's, and saying with him, or in words resembling his, that he who, even undesignedly, shall come into contact with these parts of Rabelais' great work, should forthwith plunge into running waters, and regard himself, for the rest of the day, as something more than ceremonially unclean.

Yet he whose business, or whose determination, it is to appreciate aright the civil, and therefore the literary, history of France, must needs pay this heavy price of knowledge. For, in that history, the romance of *Gargantua* is an indispensable link. From the revival of heathen antiquity, Rabelais had gathered a mass of learning resembling the diet of his own Pantagruel, who had 4,600 cows milked every morning for his breakfast. From the revival of Christian antiquity, he had learned to despise the authority and the superstitions of the church of Rome; without, at the same time, learning to reverence the authority and the doctrines of the Gospel. He thus traversed the boundless expanse of human knowledge. He traversed it under the guidance of his own wit, sagacity, and humour, a wit, vaulting at a bound, from the arctic to the antarctic poles of thought; a sagacity embracing all the higher questions of man's social existence, and many of the deeper problems of his moral constitution; and a humour which fairly baffles all attempts to analyse or to describe it. For it was the result, not of natural temperament alone, but also of the most assiduous and severe studies. The language of Greece had become as familiar to him as his mother-tongue; and, while he learned from Galen and Hippocrates to investigate the properties of living or of inert matter, he was trained, by Plato, to spiritual meditation, and by Lucian to a scepticism and a buffoonery, alike audacious and unintermitted. From the union of such a disposition and of such discipline, emerged the strange phenomenon of a philosopher in his revels. In contemplating it one knows not, as it has been well said, "whether to wonder most that such wisdom should ever assume the mask of folly, or that such folly should permit the growth and development of any true wisdom." It is, however, an apparent, rather than a real, difficulty. The wisdom is never sublime, and the folly but seldom abject. Each is but a different aspect of a nature, of which the parts are, indeed, inharmonious, but not incompatible — of a genuine Epicurean gifted with gigantic powers, but of cold



RABELAIS

affections, and of debased appetites; ever worshipping and obeying his one idol, pleasure, though at one time she bids him soar to the empyrean, and at another commands him to wallow in the sty.

Rabelais was wise in the sense in which any man may be so who delights in the strenuous exercise of a powerful understanding, and loves thinking for thinking's sake. He was wise to detect popular fallacies, and to discern unpopular truths. He was wise to see how the young might be better educated, laws better made, nations better governed, wars more vigorously conducted, and peace more securely maintained. He was wise to call down both theology and philosophy from the skies above to the earth beneath us. And he was not more wise than eloquent; sometimes arraying truth in the noblest forms of speech, though more frequently enhancing her beauty by enveloping and contrasting her with the homeliest. At his prolific touch his native tongue germinated into countless new varieties of expression; and the mines of wealth, both intellectual and verbal, which he bequeathed to future ages, after being wrought by multitudes in each, still appear inexhaustible.

The wisdom of Rabelais, was, however, of the world, worldly. It never ascended to the eternal fountains of light, nor descended to illuminate the dark places of the earth. It neither sought to interpret the awful mysteries of our nature, nor bowed down to adore in the contemplation of them. It aimed at no exalted ends, nor did it ever lead the way through any rugged and self-denying paths. It expressed neither sympathy for the wretchedness, nor pity for the sorrows, of mankind; but was satisfied to be shrewd, and witty, and comical upon them all. To the keen gaze of Rabelais, the frauds, and follies, and ignorance, and licentiousness of the papal court and priesthood afforded endless matter of scorn and merriment; but to his last hour he lived in their outward garb and communion. To that penetrating eye had been clearly revealed the majesty of the truth which the Reformers taught, and the majesty of the sufferings which they endured in its defence; but not one glow of enthusiasm could they ever kindle in his bosom, as they toiled in indigence, and died in martyrdom, to evangelise the world. Secure in the absolution of Clement VII for whatever he had done and written against the church, and secure in the license of Francis I, to publish whatever else he might please, Rabelais delighted to assume the character of a chartered libertine, or, as it might almost be said, of an intellectual debauchee. And yet, voluptuary, scoffer, and sceptic as he was, his laughter was so hearty, his glee so natural, his frolic so riotous, and his buffoonery so irresistible, that he became, not merely the tolerated, but the favoured and privileged, Momus of his times. He became also a proof to all later times, that, by the great mass of mankind, anything will be forgiven or permitted to genius, when, abandoning its native supremacy, it condescends to undertake the strangely inappropriate office of master of the revels.[c]

"In the works of Rabelais," says Michelet,[f] "the French language appeared in a greatness it never possessed before nor since. What Dante accomplished for Italian, Rabelais did for French. He employed and blended every dialect, the elements of every period and province developed in the Middle Age, adding the while a wealth of technical expression furnished by art and science. Another man would have been overwhelmed by this immense variety, but he,—he harmonised everything. Antiquity, especially the Greek genius, and a knowledge of all modern languages permitted him to envelop and master that of France." Saintsbury[e] declares that the only two men who can be compared to him in character of work and force of

genius combined are Lucian and Swift, adding: "He is much less of a mere mocker than Lucian, and he is entirely destitute, even when he deals with monks or pedants, of the ferocity of Swift. He neither sneers nor rages; the *rire immense* which distinguishes him is altogether good-natured; but he is nearer to Lucian than to Swift, and Lucian is perhaps the author whom it is most necessary to know in order to understand him rightly."[a]

CALVIN

One cannot better show how contrarieties are related than by the immediate transition from Francis Rabelais to John Calvin;[1] for, probably, no two men of commanding minds were ever more curiously contrasted with each other, as certainly no two minds were ever enshrined in bodies more dissimilar. To look upon, Rabelais was a drunken Silenus, Calvin a famished Ugolino. The one emptied his bottle before he wrote, while he was writing, and after he had written; the other contented himself with a repast of bread and water once in each six-and-thirty hours. Reposing in his easy chair, the merry doctor was hailed as lord of misrule by all the jovial spirits of his age; enthroned in the consistory of Geneva, the inexorable divine was dreaded as the disciplinarian of himself and of the whole subject city. The witty physician was L'Allegro, the austere minister Il Penseroso, of their generation. The reader of the *Gargantua* yields by turns to disgust, to admiration, and to merriment; but Democritus himself would not have found matter for one passing smile throughout the whole of the *Christian Institute*. To Rabelais, human life appeared a farce as broad as the knights of Aristophanes; to Calvin, a tragedy more dismal than the Agamemnon of Æschylus. And as they wrote, so they also lived. The traditional



CALVIN

[1 John Calvin, the celebrated Protestant reformer and theologian, was born at Noyon, Picardy, France, in 1509, and died at Genoa, May 27th, 1564. His father, Gerard Calvin, was a notary-apostolic and procurator-fiscal for the lordship of Noyon, besides holding other ecclesiastical offices. His early years are obscure, but from childhood he showed great religious feeling and an intense earnestness. He studied at Paris, Orleans, and Bourges, and although brought up with the intention of entering the priesthood, after close study of the Bible, he embraced the Reformation. In 1532 Calvin published his first work, an edition of Seneca's *De Clementia* with an elaborate commentary. In 1533, on account of speeches in opposition to the court, he was banished from Paris and it is said it was during his retirement at Saintonge that he made his first sketch of his *Institution Chrêtienne*. His other works are all of a religious nature, mostly controversial. A great many of these are of an exegetical character, of which his expository comments or homilies on the books of Scripture are by some considered the most valuable of his works. (For a further account of Calvin, see the history of the Reformation movement, volume xiii.)]

stories about Rabelais, if true, attest his love, and, even if untrue, they attest his reputed love, of that kind of wit which is called practical; all the traditions of Calvin represent him as a man at whose appearance mirth instantly took flight.

The gay doctor is made in these tales to play off his tricks on the graduates in medicine, on the chancellor du Prât, on the king and queen of France, and even on the mule of the pope himself; while the solemn theologian makes his domiciliary visits to ascertain that no dinner table at Geneva was rendered the pretext for levity of discourse, or for excess of diet.

What, then, is the congruity on which to found any comparison between these most incongruous minds? The answer is (to borrow an expressive word), that they were both devoted *ergoists*, each of them being at once a mighty master, and a submissive slave, of logic.[c] With the religious significance of Calvin's teaching we have no present concern. We shall have occasion to see something more of this in the course of our study of the Reformation. Here we are concerned rather with Calvin the writer — the author of the *Institution Chrétienne*.

Published in 1536 this book was received with unbounded delight.[a] We may, indeed, reject the story, that a thousand editions of it were sold in his own lifetime; but we cannot dispute that, during a century and a half, it exercised an unrivalled supremacy over a large part of Protestant Europe. For that dominion it was indebted, in part, to the novelty and comprehensiveness of the design it accomplished, — to the vast compass of learning, scriptural, patristic, and historical, which it embraced, — to the depth and the height of the morality which it inculcated, — and to the calm but energetic keenness with which it exposed the errors of his adversaries. But the popularity and the influence of this remarkable book is also, in part, to be ascribed to its literary merits. Calvin has been described as the Bossuet of his age. Of all the French authors whom France had as yet produced, he was the most philosophical when he speculated, the most sublime when he adored, the most methodical and luminous in the development of truth, the most acute in the refutation of error, and the most obedient to that law or spirit of his nation, which demands symmetry in the proportions, harmony in the details, and concert in all the parts of every work of art, whether it be wrought by the pen, the pencil, or the chisel. In the ninth chapter of Bossuet's *Histoire des Variations* may, indeed, be found the best, as it is a very reluctant, eulogy on the literary excellence of his great rival and predecessor. Even in the haughty gloom which the bishop of Meaux discovers in the style and tone of the reformer of Geneva, there is a not inappropriate interest. The beautiful lake of that city, and the mountains which encircle it, lay before his eyes as he wrote; but they are said to have suggested to his fancy no images, and to have drawn from his pen not so much as one transient allusion. With his mental vision ever directed to that melancholy view of the state and prospects of our race, which he had discovered in the book of life, it would, indeed, have been incongruous to have turned aside to depict any of those glorious aspects of the creative benignity which were spread around him in the book of nature.

MONTAIGNE

The immediate effect of the servitude into which Calvin had subdued the minds of his disciples was to provoke a formidable revolt. When he was giving his latest touches to his *Institution Chrétienne*, Michel de

Montaigne,[1] then in his twenty-second year, had just taken his seat in the Parliament of Bordeaux. That he afterwards became a deputy in the states-general of Blois, though maintained by no inconsiderable authorities, seems to me impossible; but it is clear that his early manhood was devoted to public, and especially to judicial, affairs. He was thus brought into contact with the busy world at the moment of a greater agitation of human society than had occurred since the overthrow of the Roman Empire. Marvellous revolutions, and discoveries still more marvellous, in the world of letters, of politics, of geography, and of religion, — the welfare of inappeasable passions, — the working of whatever is most base, and of whatever is most sublime, in our common nature, — and calamities which might seem to have fulfilled the most awful of the apocaliptic visions, had passed in rapid succession before the eyes of this acute and curious observer. It was an unwelcome and repulsive spectacle. He turned from it to seek the shelter and the repose of his hereditary mansion. In that retirement he indulged, or cherished, a spirit inflexibly opposed to the spirit by which his native country was convulsed. The age was idolatrous of novelties; and, therefore, Montaigne lived in the retrospect of a remote antiquity. It was an age of restless ambition; and, therefore, he passively committed himself and his fortunes to the current of events. The minds of other men were exploring the foundations, and criticising the superstructure, of every social polity; and, therefore, his mind was averted altogether from the affairs of the commonwealth. Because his neighbours yielded themselves to every gust of passion, he must be passionless. Because the times were treacherous, he must punctiliously cherish his personal honour. Because they were inhuman, he cultivated all the amenities of life. Because calamity swept over the world, he was enamoured of epicurean ease. Heroism was the boast of not a few, and to their virtues he paid the homage of an incredulous obeisance. Dogmatism was the habit of very many; and, therefore, Montaigne must surrender himself to an almost universal scepticism.



MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

The contrast was as captivating as it was complete. With a temper

[1 Lacépède, referring to Montaigne's *Essays*, says: "In a work that one reads again with delight and self-improvement, Michel de Montaigne has given a new glory to France." Michel Eyquem de Montaigne, was born at Perigord, of an ancient and noble family, in 1533. Perhaps the finish of his *Essays*, his principal work, is due to his early training, his father having so managed his education, that at the age of five he spoke the purest Latin, and, as an old book gives it, "was also taught Greek by way of recreation." He was married at the age of thirty-three. He lived at the court of Francis II and Henry VIII. He became mayor of Bordeaux in 1581 and in 1592; according to one old chronicle, "he died a constant and philosophic death, when he was some months short of sixty." His *Essays* were first published in 1580; the edition of 1588 was the last to be published in the author's lifetime.]

easily satisfied, — with affections as tranquil as they were kindly, — with a curiosity ever wakeful, but never impetuous, — with competency, health, friends, books, and leisure, Montaigne had all the means of happiness which can be brought within the reach of those to whom life is not a self-denying existence, but a pleasant pastime. Yet, with him, it was the pastime of an active, enlightened, and amiable mind. The study of man as a member of society was his chosen pursuit, but he conducted it in a mode altogether his own. The individual man, Michel Montaigne, such as he would be in every imaginable relation and office of society, was the subject of his daily investigation. He became, of all egotists, the most pleasant, versatile, and comprehensive. He produced complete sketches of himself with an air of the most unreserved frankness, and in a tone frequently passing from quiet seriousness to graceful badinage. He describes his tastes, his humours, his opinions, his frailties, his pursuits, and his associates with the most exuberant fertility of invention, and has wrought out a general delineation of our common humanity from the profound knowledge of a single member of it. And, as the variety is boundless, so is the unity well sustained. His essays are a mirror in which every reader sees his own image reflected, but in which he also sees the image of Montaigne reflecting it. There he is, ever changing, and yet ever the same. He looks on the world with a calm indifference, which would be repulsive were it not corrected by his benevolent curiosity about its history and its prospects. He has not one malignant feeling about him, except it be towards the tiresome, and especially towards such of them as provoke his yawns and his resentment by misplaced and by commonplace wisdom. He has a quick relish for pleasure, but with a preference for such pleasures as are social, inoffensive, and easily procured. He has a love for virtue, but chiefly, if not exclusively, when she exacts no great effort, nor any considerable sacrifice. He loves his fellow-men, but does not much, or seriously, esteem them. He loves study and meditation, but stipulates that they shall expose him to no disagreeable fatigue. He cherishes every temper which makes life pass sociably and pleasantly. He takes things as he finds them in perfect good humour, makes the best of them all, and never burdens his mind with virtuous indignation, unattainable hopes, or profitless regrets. In short, as exhibited in his own self-portraiture, he is an Epicurean, who knows how to make his better dispositions tributary to his comfort, and also knows how to prevent his evil tempers from troubling his repose.

The picture of himself, which Montaigne thus holds up to his readers as a representation of themselves, is not sublime, nor is it beautiful; but it is a striking and a masterly likeness. It is drawn with inimitable grace and freedom, and with the most transparent perspicuity; and they who are best entitled to pronounce such a judgment, admire in his language a richness and a curious felicity unknown to any preceding French writers. Even they to whom his tongue is not native, can perceive that his style is the easy, the luminous, and the flexible vehicle of his thoughts, and never degenerates into a mere apology for the want of thought; and that his imagination, without ever disfiguring his ideas, however abstract, and however subtle they may be, habitually clothes them with the noblest forms and the most appropriate colouring.

But our more immediate object is, to notice the relation in which Montaigne stands to the other great moral teachers of his native land, and to those habits of thought by which France is, and has so long been, characterised. The antagonist in everything of the spirit of his times, he seems to

have regarded with peculiar aversion the peremptory confidence by which the great controversy of his age was conducted, both by the adherents of Rome and by the founder of Calvinism. Because they would admit no doubt whatever, every form of doubt found harbour with him. Because they were dogmatists, he must be a sceptic.

In M. Faugère's edition of Pascal's *Thoughts* will be found the famous dialogue on the scepticism of Montaigne, between Pascal and De Sacy, — a delineation so exquisite, that it seems mere folly to attempt any addition to it. The genius of Port Royal, however, exhibits there its severity, not less than its justice; and a few words may not be misplaced in the attempt to mitigate a little of the rigour of the condemnation. Montaigne was a sceptic (as very many are), because his sagacity and diligence were buoyant enough to raise his mind to the clouds which float over our heads, but were not buoyant enough to elevate him to the pure regions of light which lie beyond them. His learning was various rather than recondite. It was drawn chiefly from Latin authors, and from the Latin authors of a degenerating age; not from Cicero or Virgil, but from Seneca and Pliny. Of Greek he knew but little, though he was profoundly conversant with the translation of Plutarch, with which Amyot had lately rendered all French readers familiar. From such masters Montaigne did not learn, and could not have learned, the love of truth. They taught him rather to content himself with loose historical gossip, and with half-formed notions in philosophy. They taught him not how to resolve, but how to amuse himself with the great problems of human existence. They encouraged his characteristic want of seriousness and earnestness of purpose. From such studies, and from the events of his life and times, he learned to flutter over the surface of things, and to traverse the whole world of moral, religious, and political inquiry, without finding, and without seeking, a resting-place. His aimless curiosity and versatile caprice form at once the fascination and the vice of his writings, though not indeed their only vice, for the name of Montaigne belongs to that melancholy roll of the great French sceptical writers — Rabelais, Montesquieu, Bayle, Voltaire, and Diderot — who, not content to assault the principles of virtue, have so far debased themselves, as laboriously to stimulate the disorderly appetites of their readers.

Yet the scepticism of Montaigne was not altogether such as theirs is. He has none of their dissolute revelry in confounding the distinctions of truth and falsehood, of good and evil. He does not, like some of them, delight in the darkness with which he believes the mind of man to be hopelessly enveloped. He rather placidly and contentedly acquiesces in the conviction that truth is beyond his reach. He could amuse himself with doubt, and play with it. With few positive and no dearly cherished opinions, he had no ardour for any opinion, and had not the slightest desire to make proselytes to his own Pyrrhonism. He was, on the contrary, to the last degree, tolerant of dissent from his own judgment; and, in the lack of other opponents, was prompt, and even glad, to contradict himself. Of all human infirmities, dulness, and obscurity, and vehemence, are those from which he was most exempt. Of all human passions, the zeal which fires the bosom of a missionary is that from which he was the most remote. We associate with him as one of the most pleasant of all our illustrious companions, and quit him as one of the least impressive of all our eminent instructors.[c]

Montaigne's fame has passed through several very different phases. Among his own contemporaries it grew without overstepping a somewhat restricted circle of enlightened minds. After that, the main current of French

thought took a direction opposite to that of Montaigne's. Dogmatism returned and the seventeenth century in general adhered to it. Pascal launched anathemas at Montaigne. But the sumptuous edifice of the age of Louis XIV soon crumbled away, and Montaigne came forward again, hailed as a glorious ancestor by the entire age of Voltaire and Rousseau. To-day he has ceased to arouse any tempests, but he occupies his uncontested place in the national pantheon. He will live as a writer as long as French literature exists, for like the other great sixteenth century writers, men of strong individualities like Rabelais and Calvin, he had his own language as well as his own thought — a language sovereignly free, eternally young, inimitable, and above all a fertile source of rejuvenation for the whole language. He will live as a philosopher as long as men practise the axiom of the *Essays*, "Know thyself."[d]



CHAPTER XVI

THE EARLY YEARS OF LOUIS XIII AND THE RISE OF RICHELIEU

[1610–1628 A.D.]

THE REGENCY OF MARIE DE' MEDICI

THE terrible instability of the monarchical government is revealed upon the death of Henry IV, who left as his successor a child of eight years. What follows is the opposite of what he desired; France turned inside out like a glove.

The treasure that Sully had amassed and protected is squandered in a moment, the domain that he cleared of debt is remortgaged, the possessions of the state are sold. All the institutions of this reign are abandoned, buildings are interrupted, canals given up. The manufactories of silk and of glass, the Savonnerie and the Gobelins are closed and the workmen discharged. The Louvre, which was to be degraded by lodging great inventors — the Louvre is left to the courtiers. Adieu to the museum of trades and the Jardin des Plantes; these hobbies of the king, and a thousand others sleep on the charts of Sully. At the Tuileries, at the arsenal, Henry's favourite trees, his mulberries, are removed. But for fear of the people his monuments would be torn down. By an unexpected change the people discover that they loved Henry IV. The legend begins the day of his death; it will go on increasing by comparison of what is, with what was.

Paris at this moment was dominated by an extraordinary terror. The people believed themselves lost. Women tore their hair, less from grief than from fear. It was the same everywhere. The terror of the league returned to people's minds and caused them to tremble. Hence there was a surprising, or rather a striking calm. For this great wisdom stuck to one thing — that is, that France, having neither idea, nor passion, nor moral interest, should no longer have a feeling of life. It was entirely identified with the king, with a man who had been killed; and what remained? A boy of eight who on the 15th of May surrendered the kingdom to his mother and on the 29th got a flogging.[b]

The last dispositions of Henry, on his intended departure to head his army, had appointed his queen, Marie de' Medici, regent: this was strongly in her favour as dowager; and she now found little difficulty in assuming the same authority. The duke d'Épernon, her partisan, summoned the

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parliament, and procured their acquiescence, not, however, without having made some show of menace. This seemed unnecessary : of the princes of the blood, three in number, who could alone have pretended to the regency, Condé was absent in the Netherlands, his brother of Conti was imbecile, whilst their uncle, the count de Soissons, also absent, was at enmity with every influential personage.

It was to Sully that Henry's death came as the greatest blow. Sully was panic-struck ; he saw in the murder a Catholic plot, and dreaded a renewal of the massacres of St. Bartholomew's eve ; he accordingly shut himself up with his followers in the Bastille, which he hastily provisioned by carrying off all the bread from the bakers' shops around. By the morrow, however, his suspicions had subsided, and he appeared at the court of the regent. [He was cordially received ; a reconciliation was effected, and the queen got what she was after,—the treasure that Sully had stored up in the Bastille.]

Marie de' Medici was of a weak character ; she was simple womanhood, unenforced by either firmness or sagacity. She had come to France a stranger ; and wanting both charms and wit, she had never acquired any influence either with her husband or amongst the followers of his court. Marie, therefore, shrank back into her private circle, and made confidants and counsellors of her two Italian domestics, the woman, Leonora Galigaï, and Concini, the husband of Leonora. These upstart personages, full of all the meanness and narrowness of their calling, had frequently fanned the petty jealousies of the queen against Henry ; and now it was to be feared their influence would be perniciously felt. Marie, however, was as yet too conscious of her weakness and inability. She had a vague idea of the justice of the late king's policy in keeping down the noblesse, that now pressed around her, and terrified her with their pretensions and their quarrels. She therefore had recourse to those best fitted to guide her — the ministers of the late monarch, Villeroi the secretary, Sillery the chancellor, the president Jeannin, and Sully, superintendent of finances : these, except Sully, had none of the pretensions and haughty bearing of the noblesse ; and Marie felt no loss of her will and authority in being guided by them.

It would prove a wearisome task either to narrate or to peruse an account of the cabals, quarrels, duels, and claims of the personages and princes amongst each other, and with or against the regent, during the three years which followed Henry's death. They formed a repetition of the conspiracies and alliances of the aristocracy against Catherine de' Medici half a century previous, except that at that time there were at least some noble characters and some serious aims. Whatever might be said of Châtillon or of Guise, they were animated by high views ; but the political puppets who occupied the scene during Marie de' Medici's regency, wanted not courage — indeed they were quite as ready as their predecessors to slay each other in duels — but purpose, at least other purpose than immediate greed, they had none. There were some examples of ferocity in Louis XIII's early days, which reminded one of Charles IX — the chevalier de Guise, meeting the baron de Luz and running him through the body, and being universally censured for the act until he redeemed the murder by slaying the young De Luz, son of the baron, in a fiercely-contested duel. This spirit, which showed itself in private broils, never rose into a public sentiment. One would have thought that in the army which Henry had formed, and amongst the officers whom he had honoured with his patronage and friendship, there might have been some who burned to distinguish themselves in prosecuting that war against the house of Austria which the monarch had planned. Not one noble opposed

the peace ; not one soldier of note raised his voice in behalf of the spirited policy of the late king; scarcely even a Huguenot. For Bouillon was immersed in the intrigues of Concini, and Lesdiguières was tempted by the title of duke and peer, as he afterwards was by that of constable.

Disgrace of Sully

As long, however, as the rigid Sully held the finances under his care, there was a check to spoliation, as well as a generous voice in the council to support the sage, the firm, and yet conciliating measures of the late monarch. He was at first retained, indeed, for the sake of the stern negative which he was wont to put on the demands of the greedy courtiers, as well as from fear or respect of his influence with the Huguenots. But his economical temper became soon a disagreeable restraint upon the queen herself ; and the duke de Bouillon, an indefatigable votary of intrigue, offering to effect more than even Sully in conciliating and quieting the Huguenots, this old and upright minister of the great Henry, was dismissed. Despite his probity, his able administration, and the esteem of Henry, a cloud would rest on the character of Sully but for the honest and simple exculpation contained in his own memoirs. His austere and rude manners made him many enemies. Most of his contemporaries unite in accusing him ; and, strange to say, the only family, beyond his own, whose friendship and good-will he preserved in his retreat, was that of Guise.

The disgrace of Sully left the treasure of the late king completely at the regent's disposal, who dissipated it by bribing prince and noble to remain quiet. The favour of Leonora Galigaï and her husband Concini, now Marshal d'Ancre, became more apparent. The avarice of these foreigners knew no bounds : not content with the purchase of a marquisate, and the dignity of marshal, Concini contrived to get some of the principal fortresses of the kingdom in his possession — Péronne amongst others, and the citadel of Amiens. Épernon, on his side, secured Metz ; whilst the count de Soissons and the prince of Condé, despite their pensions and their submission, by turns thwarted the court, and threw it into disorder by their private quarrels. Although the marshal d'Ancre and his wife were the chief favourites of the queen-regent, Villeroi was nevertheless the counsellor whose views, in matters of serious policy, she principally adopted. Villeroi, say the *Mémoires* attributed to Richelieu,[c] bred in the civil wars, had imbibed their virulence, which he repressed during the life of Henry. Instead of now recommending that monarch's conciliating policy, which Sully upheld, Villeroi said that there were but two parties in the state, Catholic and Protestant, and that the government must necessarily embrace one or the other. He leaned to the Catholic side, and supported the project of strengthening it by marrying the young king to a daughter of Spain, rather than to a princess of Lorraine or Savoy, as had been the advice of Henry. The prince of Condé, however, urged by the duke de Bouillon, opposed the ministry in this, for no reason, apparently, except the sake of making opposition. And for the time, Louis XIII being as yet but nine years of age, the project was allowed to slumber.[d]

First Revolt of the Lords (1614 A.D.)

The pretensions of the nobles grew with the weakness of the government. "The presents of the queen," said Richelieu, "stilled the great hunger of their avarice and ambition ; but it was by no means extinct. The

[1614 A.D.]

treasury and the coffers of the Bastille were exhausted; then they aspired to so great things that royal authority could not possibly give them the increase of power which they demanded." What they wanted in fact was governorships for themselves and their families, places of surety, and the dismemberment of France. Épernon was governor of Metz, but Henry, being afraid of that proud noble, had imposed a lieutenant upon him, who occupied the citadel and corresponded directly with the ministers. The very day of the king's death Épernon hastened an order to take possession of the lieutenant and the citadel. He had a strong place at that time only two steps from the Spaniards, which people called "his kingdom of Austrasia."



FRENCH COURTIERS, TIME OF LOUIS XIII

Many lords at the news of the assassination had thus thrown themselves into the cities with which they had an understanding, and some did not wish to ever come out again or wished at any rate to return. "The time of kings is past," they said, "that of the nobles is come." The first refusal of the regent brought about a civil war. Condé took up arms and published a manifesto in which he accused the court of having debased the nobility, ruined the finances, and taxed the poor — singular reproaches in the mouth of a prince who with his friends had received the best part of this money of the poor. He concluded according to custom by demanding the convocation of the states-general to work at the reform of existing abuses.

Brought up in the Catholic faith, although born of a Protestant family, Condé hoped to rally both parties to his cause. A large number of lords came to take their places under his standard, at their head the dukes de Ven-

[1614 A.D.]

dôme, de Longueville, de Luxemburg, de Mayenne, de Nevers, de Retz, etc. The Calvinists refused to be associated in this rising in arms. "We have all the liberty for our consciences," said they, "which we could desire, and we do not wish to abandon our wives and our houses to satisfy the appetite of some factious persons." The Catholics did not take fire either. Since the estates of the league, popular passions had been greatly appeased. The party of tolerant politicians born with L'Hôpital, and come to power under Henry IV, now counted nearly all members of the cloth and bourgeoisie. The experience which had been so cruelly bought by the civil war was not lost. The nation compared the twelve years of prosperity it had enjoyed, with those thirty-eight years of massacres and pillaging, and held close to the throne; leaving the great lords to exercise their sterile ambition in space. "The people," wrote Malherbe at that moment, "remain obedient everywhere, and without them nothing can be done." Let a firm hand take the rudder and even the most turbulent will return to the quiet in which Henry IV had held them. Some of Henry IV's old ministers, Villeroi, Jeannin, counselled the queen to act with vigour. She preferred to make terms at Ste. Menehould (May 15th, 1614). The prince of Condé received 450,000 livres in cash; the duke of Mayenne 300,000 "to get married"; M. de Longueville 100,000 livres pension, etc. But the court, wanting to gain on one side what it had lost on the other, did not pay the stockholders of the Hôtel-de-Ville in that year. That was what was done for "the poor." And the court assented to the call of the states-general.

Last Assembly of the States-General

The states-general, assembled at Paris in 1614, demands especial attention, not only as the last of these national assemblies previous to the Revolution (at the commencement of which it was continually referred to as affording precedent), but as a scene in which the political feelings and views of the age were completely developed. We have an ample account of the sittings and discussions of the commons or third order, written by Florimond Rapine, a member, one of the king's advocates. From this we learn that the majority of the lower chamber were lawyers, and a considerable portion nobles, almost all the king's lieutenant-generals being elected by their several governments. The most important consideration in the eyes of all was evidently the respective dignity of persons and classes. The first two months were consumed in disputes of precedence, in ceremonials, in mutual compliments between the orders at first, and afterwards in mutual abuse. Miron, provost of the merchants of the city of Paris, was elected president. The address of the commons to the king was spoken by this magistrate on his knees; the deputies were clothed in simple black, whilst priests and nobles shone in gold, and an attempt of the president to wear his city robes of red and blue in a procession was looked upon as a monstrous piece of ambition.

The grievance most odious to the nation was the enormity of pensions granted to the princes and chief officers. Against these the commons and the clergy joined in lifting up their voice. The next demand was to abolish the venality of the judicature, and the right of the *paulette*, a kind of annual fine, paid by the officers of parliament, in consideration of which their offices were considered hereditary. This demand the chamber of the commons could not in decency oppose; but being principally lawyers and provincial governors, it was their interest to preserve the *paulette*, and they therefore slurred over the question, and laid greater stress on the necessity

of abating the *taille*, which pressed upon the people. Thus, the nobles insisting on abolishing the hereditary right to their offices held by the legists, the legists or commons retaliated by demanding the retrenchment of pensions; and a struggle ensued between them. Savaron, an orator of eloquence in the *tiers*, exclaimed against the mercenary spirit of the noblesse, which, he said, had forsaken the pursuit of honour for the worship of the goddess Pecune, and bartered even its fidelity for a price. The nobles were indignant at this, and demanded an apology. De Mesme, another member of the *tiers*, was deputed to explain, and he made matters infinitely worse. "France," said he, "had three children: The clergy, if not the eldest born, had at least, like Jacob, got the heritage and the blessing, and therefore were to be considered the eldest. Next came the noblesse, the second son — fiefs, counties, and commands, were its share. The youngest born was the commons, whose portion was the offices of the judicature. But," concluded the orator, "let not the noblesse presume too much over the *tiers;* since it often happens that the cadets of a great family restore to it that honour and illustration which has been thrown away by the elder brethren."

The difference of interest between the states rendered their meeting productive of no effect. The regent would willingly have reduced the pensions of the great, and destroyed the *paulette*, or hereditary right of the legists to their offices; but she feared to outrage the princes by the first, whilst uncertain of the support of the commons. Nothing accordingly was decided on. The *cahiers* or remonstrances of the states were presented, were smilingly received, and slept in the king's hands. The assembly was dissolved. The queen took her own inactivity and inability for prudence. It proved the contrary. The party of the princes leagued with that of the legists, the union being effected by the exertions and intrigues of the duke de Bouillon. As the assembly of the states had proved an empty ceremony, all its advice and remonstrance being disregarded, the legists of the parliament were urged to put themselves forward as the popular representatives, and finish the work that the states had vainly attempted. The chambers of parliament accordingly assembled, and began by summoning the great peers to join them, and form a court of peers for taking into consideration the affairs of the kingdom.

This bold act was the inspiration of Bouillon. The court was terrified, and with good cause; but the parliament itself was almost equally intimidated by its own boldness, and showed but hesitation when the queen put forth her authority. Nevertheless, the peers being forbidden to join the parliament, — an injunction that Condé had the weakness to obey, — the legists prepared their remonstrances; amongst which were not only all the demands of the states, but also a claim that no act of the king should have force unless freely registered by the parliament, and that the parliament should have the right of summoning a court of peers and great officers, when occasion required. These remonstrances they insisted on reading in public before the young king, who showed a favourable and benign countenance, whilst that of the regent was convulsed with anger. But this bold attempt to put a check on the royal authority utterly failed: an edict of the king reproved the audacity of the parliament; and the latter who had been urged on more by the intrigues of the princes than by any conscientious or firm love of liberty and the public good, yielded pusillanimously, when affairs began to assume the appearance of an open rupture. Condé acted pusillanimously, also, in not declaring himself, and taking his place in the parliament, to which his secret promises of support could not impart suffi-

cient confidence. It ended by the court obtaining the upper hand, and the consequent revolt of Condé; the queen resolving, at the same time, fulfil the project of the double marriage with Spain.

MAJORITY OF LOUIS XIII; MARRIAGE WITH ANNE OF AUSTRIA

Marie de' Medici, with the young king, set out for Bordeaux, to meet future spouse. It was a military enterprise rather than a nuptial processi the court marching at the head of an army, whilst it was pursued by Co with an equal force. Both sides avoided an action. The king arrived Bordeaux, despatched his sister Elizabeth, who was to espouse the infa of Spain, to the Pyrenees, and received in return Anne of Austria, a you and not unlovely princess of fifteen. The marriage was celebrated at B deaux in November, 1615. Louis XIII was now of age; the possession a wife gave him the consciousness of manhood, and he began according to feel and to express a will of his own that disquieted and constrained queen-mother, no longer regent.

One of the young monarch's most dominant tastes was falconry, and he was not allowed to follow it in the fields, he kept a number of these bi of prey in his apartments. A young man, of the name of De Luynes, charg with the care of them, interested the king by his knowledge and conver tion on such subjects. He soon became a favourite. And Marie de' Medi who discovered the rising sun, made repeated offers to resign her authori which Louis was not prepared to accept. She then sought to concili Luynes, but he, ambitious and desirous of full power, held aloof, and c tinued in the king's presence to criticise the feeble administration of Ma and the prodigal folly of Concini.

Feeling her influence undermined, and humouring the impatience of t young monarch and his queen, who longed to visit Paris, she concluded new accommodation with Condé, greatly to the advantage of that prin He was allowed to participate in the government, and to sign the decrees the council. The queen objected to granting this power, but she was ov ruled by Villeroi, who observed that this would put the prince always in t king's power, by bringing him to the Louvre.

"There is no danger," said he, "in trusting the pen to a hand, the a of which you hold." The duke de Longueville superseded the mara D'Ancre in the government of Picardy. The Huguenots, who had arm for Condé, had also their recompense. The court and royal authority w in fact, at the feet of this young chief of the noblesse.

RICHELIEU APPEARS

The queen-dowager saw the condition to which her weakness had reduc her. The marshal D'Ancre was her only friend, and, from the general odi borne to him, he proved more a weight than a support. Another counsell indeed she had, a man attached both to her and D'Ancre, and who was w capacitated to counsel her in this extremity. This was Armand du Ples Richelieu, bishop of Luçon, who had somewhat distinguished himself in t states-general of 1614.[d]

A painter who was remarkably faithful and conscientious in art and life—the Fleming, Philip de Champagne—has left us a true representati of the fine, strong, and spare figure of the cardinal De Richelieu. T Jansenist painter would have disdained to relieve or enrich the gray ima



COMING OF AGE OF LOUIS XIII. (BY RUBENS)

(From the painting in the Louvre)

[1616 A.D.]

with a ray of light, as Rubens or Murillo would have done. That would have been changing the nature of the grave, unpromising subject. The eye would have been pleased and art better satisfied, but it would not have been true to history. It must be remembered that this was the epoch of the monochrome, when plain glass was replacing the stained glass of the sixteenth century. In France especially the taste for colour was dead.

Gray everywhere. Literary gray in Malherbe. Religious gray in Berulle and the Oratory. The new-born Port-Royal aims at dullness, one might almost say at mediocrity. Pascal will appear in thirty years. The colour is very good here, but moderate in very truth, neither too much nor too little. A learned master among masters, the good Philip nevertheless stuck so closely to nature and went so deeply into it that he satisfies both the conceptions of history and the popular impression. History recognises in this gray-bearded phantom with its lustreless gray eye and its fine spare hands the grandson of the prevost of Henry III who assassinated Guise. He comes towards you, and you do not feel reassured. That personage has indeed the appearance of life, but is it truly a man, a soul? Yes, an intellect certainly, strong, clear, and shall we say luminous, or dark and sinister? If he would take a few steps further we should be face to face. He does not inspire anxiety, but one fears that this strong head has nothing in its breast, neither heart nor vitals. In trials of witchcraft there have been too many of these evil spirits that will not remain in the lower regions, but return and disturb the world.

What contrasts in him—so hard, so yielding; so complete, so broken! By how many tortures he must have been moulded, formed, and unformed, let us say rather disarticulated, to have become that eminently artificial thing which goes without going, advances without appearing, and noiselessly, as though gliding over a deadened carpet—then, having arrived, overthrows everything. He looks at you from the depths of his mystery, this red-robed sphinx; one dare not say from the depths of his craftiness. For, in contrast with the ancient sphinx, which dies if one divines it, this one seems to say: "Whoever divines me shall die." If one should be densely and profoundly ignorant of Richelieu,[e] one must read his *Mémoires*. All the people of this race, Sulla, Tiberius, and others, have written memoirs or caused them to be written, in order to render history difficult, to baffle men, to disconcert the public, and above all to connect the beginning of their lives with the end and to disguise somewhat the terrible contradictions of their different periods.

His ill-fortune forced him to have merit early. He was the youngest of three brothers. His family was not rich, and had intermarried with plebeians. The eldest brother, who was at court, spent everything. The second, who held the bishopric of Luçon, became a Carthusian; and as this bishopric did not leave the family, the third, our Richelieu, had to become a churchman, in spite of his military taste. The eldest brother was killed in a duel, too late for his cadet, who would have taken his place and would never have become a priest. He perhaps was not born ill-natured, but he became so. The contradiction between his character and his robe gave him that rich fund of ill humour to which is due his great strength—"the bitterness of blood, which alone makes him win battles." His battles as priest could only be theological. He promptly transmitted his theses with great ostentation to the Sorbonne, dedicating them to Henry IV, and offering himself to the king for important services. Then he went to Rome to be consecrated, to offer himself to the pope. Neither the king nor the pope responded to the impatience of the ardent young politician.

Then he sadly fell back upon his bishopric of Luçon, which was poor enough and in a country of disputes, near to La Rochelle and the Huguenots. This nearness caused him annoyance; in spite of violent headaches, he wrote against them. He is not without talent. His pen is a sword, short and keen, well-fitted for disputation. He does not dwell dully upon the absurd. If he writes nonsense he does not do it like a fool. He has a happy insolence and bold turns of thought; and retreats haughtily, and by this means he makes a very good showing.

For all that, he would have remained in his obscurity at Luçon if he had had nothing but his controversy. But he was a handsome fellow, a fine porcelain creature. Concini was of faience. The handsome Bellegarde, a beau since the time of Henry III, was getting worn out. These considerations influenced the queen-mother, and she took him as her almoner.[b]



COSTUME OF THE TIME OF LOUIS XIII

It was the 30th of November, 1616, that Richelieu entered the ministry for the first time. The Spanish ambassador, the duke of Monteleone, showed keen satisfaction at his accession and wrote to Madrid that there was "no better than he in France for the service of God, of the crown of Spain, and of the public good"—of the public good, as the heirs of Philip II understood it! This diplomat had not the gift of divination!

The majestic drama of the ministry of the great Richelieu thus opens as a comedy of intrigue. It is by no means probable that he began his career by deceiving the pope in order to obtain his bishop's bull, but it seems certain that he got into power by deceiving Spain and preparing to deceive and supplant Concini. He was determined to gain power at any price; he felt himself necessary; an irresistible force was driving him forward! In this feverish need of action by which he is devoured he passes over all obstacles, perhaps even over those of conscience and personal dignity as over others. He flatters those who despise him, caresses those who hate him, and lowers to vain mediocrity that brow which was made for empire. He hides at the bottom of his soul all his nobler and better feelings, as one would conceal criminal tendencies. Unfortunate novitiate of political greatness! There will always be very different opinions of Richelieu according to whether one studies the end or the means, the public man or the private man. Richelieu never was false to the duties of the statesman toward his country's greatness, but he was unfortunately less faithful to the laws of morality and of humanity.[b]

Marie was not aware of the merit of this personage; yet it may have been by his bold counsel that she ventured a stroke of policy, of boldness unusual to her, in arresting Condé in the Louvre, and sending him to the Bastille. The noblesse, his partisans, instantly fled to raise their followers. The

[1616–1617 A.D.]

Parisian mob collected, and showed its humour by pillaging the hôtel of the marshal D'Ancre; there, however, its fury subsided. The queen was victorious, and the fugitive partisans of Condé were reduced to impotent exclamation of vengeance and rage. Their cause, however, was not lost. The young king had joined his mother in the project for getting rid of Condé; but in delivering himself from one master, Louis was mortified to find that he had given himself another. The marshal D'Ancre now ruled uncontrolled at court and in council; and the pride of Louis was even more hurt by the ascendency of the upstart Concini than by that of Condé. Luynes, his favourite, and the young nobles who composed his court, flattered the monarch's pride, and fanned his resentment. Marie de' Medici deemed this knot of striplings to be occupied in pleasure, whilst they meditated a plot. The arrest of Condé was a precedent and example.[d]

ASSASSINATION OF MARSHAL D'ANCRE

It was well to have arrested the prince de Condé, said Richelieu; one might have done as much for Concini. Strange forgetfulness of circumstances; the king had no one, and his man Vitry, captain of the guards, did not have the guards with him. Concini on the contrary never went anywhere unless surrounded by thirty gentlemen. Vitry collected fifteen with great difficulty, hid them, and armed them with pistols under their coats.

They chose the moment when Concini came to make his usual morning visit to the queen. He was on the Louvre bridge with his large escort. Vitry was so frightened that he passed without seeing him, having him before his eyes. When told, he returned. "I arrest you!" "*A mi!*" ("to my aid!") cried Concini. He had not finished when three or four pistol shots went off and blew his brains out. "It is by order of the king," said Vitry. Only one of Concini's men had put his hand to his sword (April 24th, 1617).

The Corsican Ornano took the king, raised him in his arms, and showed him at the window. The people did not understand. It was first said that Concini had wounded the king. But when it was known it was he on the contrary who had been killed, there was an explosion of joy throughout the whole city. The queen-mother was very much frightened. Her one cry was "*Poveretta di me!*" However, what had she to fear? Whatever antipathy her son might feel for her he could not dream of bringing her to judgment. He was satisfied with removing her guards. The doors of her apartments were walled up, save one. She showed no pity for Concini or his widow. When someone said to her: "Madame, your majesty alone can inform her of the death of her husband"—"Ah, I have many other things to do! If you can't tell it to her, sing it to her; cry in her ears: *L'Hanno ammazzato.*" Terrible word; it was the very same that Concini had used to the queen the day of Henry IV's death, when he told her the news that she knew only too well. Leonora tremblingly sought refuge with her. She refused it. Then that woman to whom the queen had confided her crown diamonds (as a resource in case of misfortune) undressed and went to bed, hiding her diamonds under her. She was pulled from her bed; everything was ransacked; the room was pillaged. She was taken to the Conciergerie. Paris was in a state of celebration. The crowd hunted and disinterred her husband's body, which was solemnly burned in front of Henry IV's statue in token of expiation. It was said that a madman had bitten out the heart and eaten a piece of it.

The life of the queen-mother hung by a thread. Among the murderers, several would have liked to kill her, thinking that she might arise later and avenge the death of her lover. But Luynes would have dared neither to counsel the royal child to do such a thing nor to do it without orders. He saved her by surrounding her with the king's guards. The Capuchin Travail, Père Hilaire, who had formerly intrigued against the marriage of Marie de' Medici, and who was actor and executor in the murder of her favourite, thought that nothing was accomplished unless she perished. He applied to a man of her party who had access to her at will, her equerry Bressieux, trying to get him to kill her. The equerry refused. "Never mind," said Travail, "I will bring it about that the king goes to Vincennes; and then I will have her torn in pieces by the people." Luynes, who had promised the Capuchin the archbishopric of Bourges if he aided in killing Concini, did not wish to keep his word when the deed had been done. Instead he profited by some sanguinary words which this chatterer had uttered, out of folly and bravado, to have him judged and broken on the wheel.



ALFRED DE LUYNES

The king had caused parliament to be informed that he had ordered the arrest of Concini, who, having resisted, had been killed. He spoke of his mother only with respect, saying that he had prayed his lady and mother to approve of his taking the rudder of state. Parliament came to congratulate him. The action which could so easily be brought against Concini and his wife was skilfully stifled and turned from the true issue. A case of sorcery was made out of it. That was, moreover, the custom of the century. The libidinous tyrannies practised by priests in women's convents, when by chance they came to light, were changed into sorcery, and the devil was charged with everything. Leonora herself thought the devil was in her body and had herself exorcised in the church of the Augustines by priests who had come from Italy at her request. As she suffered terribly in her head, Montalte, her Jewish physician, killed a cock, and applied it to her head still warm, which was interpreted as a sacrifice to hades. An astrological document was also found in her rooms, the nativity of the queen and her children. It is not at all improbable that when losing her influence she tried to keep her hold on the queen by magic. It was the general folly of the age. Luynes believed in it also. Richelieu says that

[1617 A.D.]

he had two Piedmontese magicians come to find him powders which he might put in the king's garments, and herbs for his shoes.

However much of truth there may have been in Leonora's sorcery, it did not deserve death, and her thefts even, her brazen-faced sales of places and orders, would have merited only the whip. Court tradition, which was very favourable to such people, as enemies of Henry IV, has not failed to invent, to place in the mouth of Leonora proud and insolently daring words — for example: "My charm was that of a mind set on folly." She was beheaded at the Grève and then burned.[b]

THE MINISTRY OF LUYNES (1617–1621 A.D.)

The position of the queen-mother was mortifying and distressing. She had been deceived by the boy-king; stripped of her power; her dearest friends had perished. Of the band of courtiers who so lately hung upon her smile, Richelieu alone evinced a determination to adhere to the fortunes of his mistress. Marie de' Medici besought an interview with her son. This favour was long denied. Luynes feared a mother's influence over a being so young and so weak as Louis. Marie was allowed to retire to Blois, whither Richelieu accompanied her.



Louis XIII

The wealth as well as the influence of Concini fell to the share of Luynes, who was, however, neither a foreigner nor so rash and avaricious as his predecessor. Louis XIII, from his very first moment of grasping power, showed the same incapacity of wielding it that ever distinguished him. The love of the chase was the only active quality the young monarch seemed to have inherited from his father Henry. Luynes became hence sole master of the state. He found two parties aspiring to influence—that of the prince of Condé, and that of the queen-mother. One was in prison, and the other exiled; so that Luynes found no difficulty in flattering and giving hopes alternately to both, whilst he permitted neither the liberation of the prince nor the return of Marie de' Medici. The body of the noblesse, who had flown to arms upon Condé's arrest, and who had returned on learning Concini's fall, thought it a more serious step to rebel against the king than against his mother and her favourite. The young court, too, had charms; and the prince of Condé was now but ill supported by that aristocratic band that had shared his envy and hatred towards the family of Ancre.

Marie de' Medici bore her disgrace with impatience. For some time she lulled herself with the hope that Luynes was sincere in his promises of allowing her to return. She expected in vain; and at length resolved to work her deliverance by leaguing with the prince of Condé and her former enemies.

These intrigues coming to light, Richelieu, who was considered to be the source of them, was ordered to quit Blois, where the queen resided, and retire to his bishopric. But Marie had already profited by the advice of this able counsellor. She kept up an active correspondence with the duke d'Épernon, who was master of Metz, and through him with such of the nobility as were envious of Luynes. Having by these means formed a party, Marie escaped by night from the château of Blois; was met by Épernon at the head of an armed body of gentlemen; and, retreating south, soon found herself at the head of a party strong enough to defy her enemies. There cannot be a stronger example of the overgrown power of the nobles, and of the manner in which they absorbed the whole force of the crown, than the authority wielded by Epernon at this time against his sovereign. The duke had no less than five governments, *viz.*, the provinces of Saintonge, Auxerrois, the Limousin, the Bourbonnais, and the Three Bishoprics. Add to these Metz, the bulwark of the kingdom adjoining Lorraine; Loches, the strongest fortress of Touraine, which he held, together with the command of all the French infantry, as colonel-general; and it can be no longer a wonder that the defection of such a grandee should have immediately reduced Louis and his favourite to treat with the queen-mother.

Richelieu was recalled from his diocese, and employed to effect an accommodation, which took place. Marie de' Medici was the principal gainer: she obtained the government of Anjou, and the towns of Angers, Chinon, and Pont-de-Cé, as fortresses of surety. The king promised to restore Marie de' Medici to his confidence, and to her place at court. But this was postponed for the time. An interview took place betwixt Louis and his mother. A light remark on one side, answered by a cold compliment on the other, is all that is recorded of the meeting. "How your majesty has grown!" exclaimed Marie. "Grown for your service, madame," was the young monarch's reply. The queen-mother remained at Angers, whilst the court returned to Paris. Épernon received a written pardon for his rebellion, from which he had derived no advantage; a circumstance that caused him to be taxed with folly by his contemporaries. Disinterestedness was inconceivable to the age.

The first step of Luynes, in order to counteract the revived party of the queen-mother, was to liberate Condé from Vincennes. But his long captivity had secluded this prince from his ancient followers; and Richelieu, who saw the object of Luynes, was able to succeed in not only drawing over the whole body of the noblesse to the queen-mother, but even in exciting the Huguenots to stir in her favour. These measures of Richelieu, who was at the same time amusing Luynes by feigned friendship and communications, became ripe in 1620, when, upon a fresh refusal to admit Marie de' Medici to court, all the great nobles, who had most of them formerly conspired against her, now espoused her cause, and quitted the court. Almost all France was in array against Louis and Luynes. Épernon armed his five governments and his many towns. Marie herself was in Anjou. The duke de Longueville held Normandy; the duke de Vendôme, Brittany; the count of Soissons, Perche and Maine; the marshal De Bois-dauphin had Poitou; De Retz, La Trémouille, Mayenne, Rouen, and Nemours held the southern provinces betwixt them, except Languedoc, where Montmorency remained neutral. The Huguenots were also against the court, as was the duke de Rohan, their principal leader, and La Rochelle, their chief town. This was owing to a decree, issued by Luynes, that the church lands of Béarn, where Henry IV had established Protestantism, should be restored to the

[1620-1621 A.D.]

Catholic priesthood. Thus Richelieu enlisted under the banners of his mistress these two great malcontent and independent powers in the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the reformers, which it was afterwards the great aim and achievement of his policy to crush. In thus wielding them successfully against the monarch, Richelieu became acquainted with their danger, their strength, and their secret springs.

Condé, however, inspired Luynes this time with additional vigour. The prince himself was excited to avenge his long confinement upon the queen-mother, who had caused it; and the king, therefore, was induced to march with an army, headed by Condé, to reduce the rebels. He was successful in Normandy; the insurgents retired everywhere before the royal army, which turned southward, and drove the queen from even Angers, her principal fortress. Luynes, contented with these advantages, showed himself willing to treat, as did Richelieu, who was somewhat disgusted by the want of alacrity and resolution evinced by the noblesse, his partisans. Condé, however, pushed on the war; and although a treaty was on the eve of being concluded, he attacked the forces of Marie's adherents, and put them to the rout at Pont-de-Cé.

This success, instead of breaking off negotiations, accelerated them; for Luynes became instantly jealous of Condé, and feared his predominance, if the queen-mother should be completely crushed. A treaty was therefore concluded on similar terms to the preceding one, with the important addition that the king should become really reconciled to his mother, and that she should reside at court. Many doubts and accusations exist as to the good faith of Richelieu in these transactions. The loss of Angers, and the defeat of Pont-de-Cé, were said to be arranged and allowed by him; and it is more than probable that, in disgust with the noblesse, who were at once domineering to their friends and feeble towards their enemies, Richelieu had conceived the project of reconciling Louis and the queen-mother, as well as their respective favourites, Luynes and himself; thus uniting the scattered elements of the government, and enabling it to set its turbulent enemies at defiance. Richelieu, by this plan, hoped to secure to himself a place in the council, where he felt confident he would soon rule such weak spirits as Louis, the queen-mother, and Luynes. But the latter had the sagacity to dread Richelieu's superiority. Although the bishop sedulously sought the favourite's friendship, and although an alliance took place betwixt their families, nevertheless Luynes persevered in his jealousy; prevented, by his intrigues, the cardinal's hat stipulated for Richelieu in the late treaty, and kept the doors of the council chamber inexorably closed against him.

The Huguenot Uprising; The Siege of Montauban (1621 A.D.)

Although Luynes had risen to power as a mere favourite, he still held it with a firmer hand than Concini; nor was he without the views or the sagacity of a statesman. Even previous to his having at court so able a prompter as Richelieu, he had anticipated the future policy of that minister in endeavouring to crush the Huguenots. Luynes was determined upon restoring to the Catholic priesthood the church lands of Béarn, which had been in the hands of the Protestants since the days of Jeanne d'Albret. Louis was equally bent on rescuing from heresy the native province of his family. After the Treaty of Pont-de-Cé, the king marched into Béarn, and reduced not only the church lands to his will, but the little province itself, the privileges of which he annulled. The Huguenots were of course indignant and

alarmed. This was not the only infraction of the agreements made with them. Favas, their deputy at court, declared that the government intended to reduce them altogether. They accordingly summoned a general assembly of reform at La Rochelle, despite the prohibition of the king; and their consistory published a bold decree, dividing the Protestant regions of France into circles, after the manner of Germany, uniting again those circles in a general government, and establishing the rules by which this government was to raise troops and taxes, to levy war and exercise independent jurisdiction. The scheme was a direct imitation of the United Provinces of Holland. It manifested fully the republican ideas and leanings of the Huguenots, and roused the court, and above all Richelieu, to crush them.

An army was raised by Luynes,[d] and Louis XIII left Paris accompanied by the good wishes of all zealous Catholics and those who were desirous of peace. He had re-established the tax paid by judges, magistrates, and financiers on their offices, to secure them to their sons in case of death, contracted a loan, and obtained from the clergy an extraordinary tax. On the 19th of May, 1621, he occupied Saumur, which he was able to leave to Duplessis-Mornay in spite of his neutral attitude. It was necessary to prevent all communication between the Protestants, both north and south of the Loire. He afterwards received the submission of the towns in Touraine and Poitou, with the exception of La Rochelle, and St. Jean d'Angély. This latter place belonged to the duke de Rohan, who placed a garrison there under the command of Soubise, whilst he himself went to take command in Guienne.

Lesdiguières undertook the siege of it, which lasted twenty-five days, from the 30th of May to the 25th of June, and was very murderous. Soubise, seeing the royal troops continually increase, ended by capitulating; he obtained for the garrison the honours of war, on condition of his promising always to serve the king. The fortifications of St. Jean were demolished, the trenches filled in, and its privileges suppressed. Deliberations took place as to the besieging of La Rochelle, or the advance on Guienne, where Rohan and La Force were raising arms on all sides. The taking of La Rochelle would have ended the contest; but it offered great difficulties, especially on the side next the sea, where the royal fleet would scarcely hold its own against the numerous and well-disciplined ships of the Calvinists.

Luynes wished to obtain peace by the quickest means; he believed it would be much more rapidly accomplished by dividing the enemy and gaining over the leaders. Therefore he sent Épernon with four or five thousand men to blockade La Rochelle by land, whilst he himself took the Guienne route with the king and the bulk of the army. Mayenne,[1] who commanded the first division, carried Nérac by storm on the 9th of July; the little towns hastened to throw open their gates. One of the principal Calvinist *seigneurs* of Guienne, De Boisse de Pardaillan, had made his submission the moment the royal troops had arrived, so as not to obey La Force. They received favourable intelligence on every side. In the north and in the centre the Protestants allowed their arms to be taken from them and the walls of their towns pulled down, without striking a blow. Condé occupied and demolished without resistance the fortress of Sancerre, in his government of Berri. They met with resistance only at Clérac, a little town upon the Lot. It took the royal army twelve days to gain possession of it; it then entered, August 5th, and inflicted the most severe punishment. The chancellor Duvair, who accompanied the king, died during this siege;

[1 Henry, duke of Mayenne, son of that duke who was at one time the head of the League.]

[1621 A.D.]

Luynes did not hurry to appoint a successor, and appropriated the seals meantime. This method of monopolising all the power, all the military and civil honours, put the finishing touch to the irritation caused by his favours, and furnished an inexhaustible subject for the raillery of his enemies.

La Force was shut up at Montauban, where the minister Chamier, one of the most fanatical Calvinists, and the mayor Dupuy, who showed an equal devotion to the cause, co-operated with him most energetically. All the future of the party lay in the defence of this place. Rohan scoured Languedoc and the Cévennes to raise men, and to form a relieving army. The king had the choice of pursuing Rohan, or of besieging Montauban. He decided upon this last step, in the hopes of striking a decisive blow, and after some useless parleying, with which Sully was intrusted, the works were commenced without delay. Unfortunately they had not taken part in any other siege for a long time, except that of St. Jean d'Angély; they had fallen out of the way of taking part in real warfare, and they were even obliged to employ Italian engineers. The royal army found itself hardly sufficient for a siege of such importance. They believed in vain that they might find some partisans in the place. They attempted to surprise it, but were unsuccessful. Mayenne, who had opened the trenches August 18th, wished to rush the attack, before the works were finished. He lost many of his men, and, imprudently exposing himself, paid for his temerity with his life.



A French Nobleman, Time of Louis XIII

The news of Mayenne's death caused a stir in Paris, as his name had acted as a spell on the populace, amongst whom the war against the Protestants had awakened all the ancient passions of the league. The following day, the 18th, they attempted with no better result to make a breach by aid of the cannon. On the 28th, Rohan came to the assistance of the place in spite of the vigilance of the dukes of Angoulême and Montmorency. He cut himself a passage through at the point of the sword, although losing many men, and gave to the besieged garrison the means for prolonging their resistance. The king called together all the most experienced marshals and military men. They recognised the fact that it was impossible to carry Montauban before the winter. Luynes, who had become constable without knowing how to command an army or direct a siege, incurred the responsibility of this failure, but it did not disturb him. He wished to make peace, contrary to the desires of the military men and of the earnest Catholics. He asked for an interview with Rohan, and tried to bribe him. Rohan refused to desert his party, all the more because he was unable to do so, being under the direction of ministers

whose impassioned ideas allowed him very little personal freedom. The Calvinists hoped that, thanks to the resistance of Montauban, they would weary the king of his policy. They were not mistaken. A final attack, attempted the 21st of October, failed like all the previous ones. The royal army, weakened by fatigue and sickness, and decimated by little battles, rapidly diminished. They had fired uselessly twenty thousand cannon shots, an enormous total for the times. On the 2nd of November Luynes decided to raise the siege, subject to a renewal in the spring.

The king, on retiring, made his entry into Toulouse, the most Catholic of the towns of the south, where he was received with general acclamation. He decided to limit himself during the winter to the keeping open of the communications between Toulouse and Bordeaux. Accordingly he ordered the marshal De Rouquelaure and Bassompierre to besiege the little town of Monheur, which the Calvinists occupied near Tonneins. The camp and the court were full of divisions, as always happens after great reverses. They threw on one another the responsibility for the errors that had been committed. Luynes was naturally the one whom they attacked the most. The most ardent Catholics reproached him with having desired peace too much; the military men with having attempted the siege of Montauban with insufficient forces, through avarice, some said. Father Arnoux, the king's confessor, and Puisieux, secretary of state, began to rise up against him and tried to destroy his credit. On the 11th of December Monheur capitulated.

Death of Luynes (1621 A.D.)

Their lives were granted to the garrison, but the town was pillaged and burned for having given itself to the Huguenots. Three days after, on the 14th, Luynes died suddenly of fever. He was just at the pinnacle of his success. Nevertheless, Louis XIII, in spite of his caution and his ordinary dissimulation, had begun to complain of his yoke, and to lend an ear to the accusations of his adversaries. Luynes had had few friends, and his enemies, whose numbers were increasing, were already attacking him with extreme vigour. His ambition and his avidity, equally unrestrained, had turned everyone against him. The greater number of the authors who were contemporary with him, animated against him by prejudice and the strongest personal feelings, had treated him unfairly, and attributed all sorts of extravagances to him, as, for instance, wishing to see himself made prince of Avignon, or king of Austrasia. His political talents deserve more justice. Firm without illusion, and knowing how to ally moderation with energy, he had conducted the war briskly in the desire to arrive more quickly at a peace which he wished to make prompt and certain. This end he never ceased to pursue, and Richelieu, who gained it, only finished a work that had been begun.[1]

This check saved the Huguenots for the time, although it was counterbalanced by the ascendency of Guise in Poitou. The treaty was concluded in the following year at Montpellier, by which it was stipulated that affairs should be replaced as they were before the war, new conquests restored, and new fortifications demolished. One point the king gained; this was that the Huguenots should no more have a lay assembly. A synod of ecclesiastics was alone allowed them; thus obviating the revival of that republican assembly at La Rochelle, which had roused all the suspicions and energy of king and court. Louis, returning to his capital, was welcomed as a hero. The two queens rivalled each other in the brilliancy of their fêtes. But neither applause nor pleasure could prevent the king from relapsing into

[1622–1624 A.D.]

that state of apathy which was natural to him. Louis XIII was as completely the *roi fainéant* as were the last of the race of Clovis and Charlemagne. But times were altered; the tree of royalty had taken root, and stood as erect, when withered and sapless, as when in spring and leaf.

RICHELIEU'S RETURN TO THE MINISTRY

Louis XIII had been inspired by Luynes with an aversion for Richelieu. It was with great difficulty that Marie de' Medici obtained for him in 1622 the cardinal's hat stipulated in a former treaty; but all her efforts in procuring him admission to the council were resisted. The marquis de la Vieuville was favourite for the moment, and he strengthened the king's prejudice against the cardinal. Marie was persevering; and at length Louis yielded. He permitted Richelieu to take his seat at the council table, but on the express condition that he was to be without office, and that he should not consider himself a minister. The cardinal expressed himself perfectly contented with this arrangement: he took his seat; and the inefficacy of all the precautions taken against him soon appeared. They had bound the arms of a giant, who broke his bonds the instant that it pleased him to be free. From the first moment that Richelieu spoke, his genius dominated; and the monarch himself, as well as La Vieuville, cowered beneath an ascendency that they found it vain to dispute.

To secure this ascendency over the monarch, Richelieu scorned to make use of the same means which sufficed La Vieuville and Luynes. Instead of flattering Louis, and directing him in the way of pleasure, the cardinal at first strove to awaken the young king to a sense of the country's debasement, to its true interests, and its possible glory. He pointed out the turbulent disobedience of the great, the sedition of the Huguenot assemblies, the weakness of ministers, and the disorder of the finances — the consequent poverty and misery of the kingdom, as well as the decay of its influence and dignity in its relations with foreign potentates. He pointed to the house of Austria, daily increasing its strength and extending its territories, at that very moment triumphant from the conquest of the Palatinate, and threatening to crush those Protestant states of Germany which had defied the might of Charles V. Louis listened, and was excited, not indeed to take vigorous counsels himself, but to confide in a minister who had shown himself able to conceive and execute them.[1]

The chief object then coveted by the house of Austria was the possession of the Valtelline, a strip of Alpine territory which might serve to connect the dominions of that family in Germany and in Italy. It had been in subjection to the Grisons, a Protestant race; and Spain seized this pretext to conquer it in the name of the pope. France had opposed this with the usual feebleness of her diplomacy. The first act of Richelieu was to cut short the negotiation, to defy both the pope and Spain, and to send an army under the marshal D'Estrées into the Valtelline, which expelled the Spaniards, and restored the region to its ancient masters.

Richelieu dared to show the same bold front to the Huguenots at the same time. Determined on completely reducing them, his first endeavour

[1 In Richelieu's *Mémoires*, which he intended to serve as historical material for his biography, it is stated that Richelieu in a single interview dramatically placed this gigantic scheme before the young king, and that Louis from this time was obedient to the minister. This, however, is hardly in agreement with the facts. Richelieu seems hardly to have found his policy at first; and he was not sure of Louis' constancy until after his success at La Rochelle.]

was to drive them from Poitou and La Rochelle, where they could at all times receive succours from England, and to circumscribe their influence to the provinces of the southeast. He refused to evacuate Montpellier; and the Huguenots were thus provoked to rebel. The cardinal at the same time deprived them of the aid of the English monarch, with whom he was negotiating the marriage of Henrietta of France, sister of Louis. Rohan, and a great number of the Protestants, thought it on this account imprudent to recommence war; but his impetuous brother, Soubise, made an attack on the port of Blavet, seized some ships that were fitting out there, and sailing thence made a descent upon the island of Ré. He was defeated, the Huguenots being neither decided nor prepared for a general insurrection. The consequence of the rash attempt of Soubise was that in the accommodation that ensued the royalists kept Fort Louis, merely promising not to annoy from it the inhabitants or shipping of La Rochelle.

CONSPIRACY OF THE COURT AGAINST RICHELIEU

Richelieu here postponed his design of completely reducing the Huguenots. The conquest of La Rochelle could alone do this effectually, and that required a large naval force, as well as such preparations of every kind as would ensure success. Besides, for the present, the cardinal was aware that he would soon have to encounter a court intrigue, a triumph over which was more requisite to establish his power than even the subjugation of La Rochelle. The marriage of the princess Henrietta with Charles of England, which had been desired by Richelieu, as securing the previous neutrality of the latter country in a war against the Huguenots, had proved a source of difference rather than of alliance. The gallant Buckingham, who had come to demand and escort back the princess, had excited the jealousy of the cardinal. He had shown at the French court the sample of such a minister as the age esteemed — gay, liberal, handsome, looking as well as wielding command. He had admired the young queen, and had boldly expressed his admiration. His friend, Lord Holland, had paid court to the duchess de Chevreuse, the companion of the queen, and the most lovely woman of the time. Richelieu admired Madame de Chevreuse, nay, by some, is said to have pretended to the queen herself. Whatever was the truth, Richelieu and Buckingham conceived for each other a mutual hatred, which afterwards produced a rupture between their respective sovereigns. And a strong pique at the same time arose between the cardinal and the queen.

Another personage at court, now grown into importance, was Gaston, duke of Orleans, brother of the king Louis was extremely jealous of him. A tutor, under whom the young duke improved and began to give promise of good conduct and manly virtue, was superseded by a mere courtier, calculated to give lessons in vice and dissipation. Ornano, who succeeded this man, found the prince absorbed in pleasure, and debased. He endeavoured to rouse Gaston, by explaining to him his rank, his hopes; and he did succeed in awakening his ambition. The young duke of Orleans demanded to enter the council. Richelieu, then in the commencement of his influence, replied by banishing Ornano for a time. Gaston relapsed into dissipation, and seemed little inclined to give umbrage or uneasiness to the government.

The worst part of feudal tyranny was that it interfered with the private affections of all men. Richelieu, wielding the power of Louis XIII, was not content with commanding the loyal submission of the first prince of the

[1626 A.D.]

blood. He thought proper to impose a wife upon him, nay, to choose one. The lady selected was Mademoiselle de Montpensier, rich, lovely, allied to the crown, and heiress of the house of Guise. There could be no objection to such a bride, except the compulsion that gave her. Gaston rebelled. The projected marriage convulsed the entire court, and wellnigh the kingdom also.

Richelieu's object was to provide an heir to the crown, which Louis seemed not destined long to wear. Anne of Austria, the little queen, as she was called, to distinguish her from the queen-mother, was on the other hand averse to Gaston's marriage; and she joined the friends of the latter in endeavouring to thwart the cardinal's plan. Ornano had resumed his influence and station in the prince's household; and he it was who chiefly urged Gaston to resist. Ornano was arrested. This increased the rage of the duke of Orleans; and at length a plot was entered into and approved by him, to get rid of the domineering Richelieu in the same manner that Ancre had been removed. The cardinal then inhabited a country house at Fleury. Gaston's servants were to betake themselves thither, under pretence that their master was to honour Richelieu on that day with his company to dinner, and the murder was to have taken place. Richelieu received warning. The count de Chalais, who was to have been the chief perpetrator, ventured to sound a friend, who expressed at once a lively abhorrence of the attempt, and threatened to denounce it. Chalais became alarmed, and, resolving to anticipate the informer, went himself to the cardinal, and made a disclosure. Gaston was astonished, in consequence, by the appearance of the cardinal in his apartment, on the morning appointed for the deed. "I am sorry," said Richelieu, smiling, "your highness did not give me warning of your intention to make use of my residence. I should have been prepared. As it is, I abandon it to your service." Having so said, Richelieu handed his shirt to Gaston (one of the ceremonials of etiquette observed at a prince's levée) and then retired.



A French Gentleman, Time of Louis XIII

The cardinal, not content with thus confounding his enemies, was resolved to punish them and intimidate others by their example. By probing Chalais and his family, it was discovered that the nobles upon whose aid Gaston reckoned were the duke de Vendôme and his brother the grand prior, illegitimate sons of Henry IV. The former was governor of Brittany. Richelieu, dissembling his suspicions, enticed them to repair to the court at Blois, where both were instantly arrested. The imprisonment of all his friends, and the danger of some, would have roused to serious resistance a prince of more energy than Gaston. The young duke was not wanting in indignation; but Richelieu had prepossessed the monarch's mind, and had

taught Louis to believe that his royal life had been aimed at as well as his minister's; that the young queen, Anne of Austria, was privy to the plot; and that she was to have married the duke of Orleans on his accession to the throne. These accusations hardened and enraged the mind of Louis XIII. Gaston, in the power of the court, was forced to espouse Mademoiselle de Montpensier; the count de Chalais perished on the scaffold; the queen was publicly reproached by her husband with having sought a second marriage, to which she indignantly replied that there was not so much to be gained by the change. Her friend, Madame de Chevreuse, was banished from court. Thus Richelieu, triumphant over his foes, amongst whom the queen and the king's brother were numbered, showed how fatal it was to provoke his enmity, how fruitless to resist his power.[d]

The Treaty of Montpellier in 1626 granted a hollow peace to the Huguenots; and a few months later, that is to say in May, peace was signed with Spain. Years before, Richelieu, then young and obscure, had often discussed with his friend Father Joseph how best to subdue the neighbouring town of La Rochelle, the stronghold of the Huguenots; and time had not softened his views on the subject. The English people, chafing under the influence of their French and Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, longed to assert their Protestantism; Buckingham, opposed to her anti-Protestant policy, longed to provoke the French court. What then would better serve their ends than adoption of the Huguenot cause? So war was begun with France. Richelieu brought his forces up under the walls of La Rochelle, and drew a cordon of forts around the unhappy town, cutting off all approaches. To shut the city off from English aid, Richelieu constructed a wonderful mole across the mouth of the harbour. This was built of solid masonry, extending about seven yards from one shore and four hundred yards from the other, the intervening space of six hundred yards being partially blocked with sunken ships and further guarded by a half-circle of ships lashed together with their prows outward. Inside the boom a royal fleet watched against sallies, and outside another fleet watched for the English.[a]

THE SIEGE OF LA ROCHELLE DESCRIBED BY SEIGNOBOS

The work of construction at first went on slowly, and the besieged could do little to hinder it. They could only fire off a few guns or post a few ambuscades in the path of the staff officers as they went from one part of the army to the other; but it was winter time, and bad weather often interrupted the work of construction. The besieged had sent to ask the king of England to help them; and the latter pledged himself "to the mayor, aldermen, peers, and citizens of La Rochelle, to help them by land and sea according to his royal power until a firm peace had been established." As a result he promised to send an expedition to help them in the spring, and to furnish them with provisions; in the meantime he allowed a collection to be made for their benefit in his kingdom.

The inhabitants of La Rochelle, on their part, engaged themselves to provide pilots for the English, to prepare magazines and shelters on their coasts, and to equip vessels to help in the expedition. And if the king of France should attack the territories of the king of England, they would do all they could to create a diversion. It was agreed that neither the besieged nor the king of England should make any treaty without consulting the other. The king of England had wished to impose two other conditions; he asked the besieged to send him the children of their principal families

[1627–1628 A.D.]

as hostages, and to receive an English garrison within their walls. They only consented to receive English ships into their harbour. They accepted the king of England as an ally to help them to defend their independence, but they did not wish to have him for a master.

The royal army encamped before La Rochelle did not suffer very much from the winter. A tax had been levied in the principal towns in France which had made it possible to provide the soldiers with good clothing. The construction of the dike provided occupation for the men, and the boats were manned by volunteers from picked regiments. Meanwhile Louis XIII was wearying of this long siege with no fighting. He declared that his health would suffer if he did not go to Paris for a time. Richelieu, fearing lest the king's departure might have a bad effect on the troops, tried to afford him some distraction by giving false alarms; several times a sortie was announced, and the king remained on horseback all night waiting for it, but the besieged did not make any movement. At last Richelieu felt he could no longer keep the king with the army, so he wrote to him saying that he could now absent himself for a time "without any injury to his cause."

The king immediately announced his departure. In his absence the cardinal was to be commander-in-chief, he was called "lieutenant-general of the king in the army before La Rochelle." He had full power over all the troops, cavalry and infantry, and also over the artillery for continuing the siege, and was even empowered to receive the submission of the inhabitants and take possession of the town. The king admonished all the generals and officers to "obey him as implicitly as they would their king."

On the 10th of February, 1628, Richelieu accompanied the king two leagues from the camp; there they separated, embracing each other at parting Louis warned the cardinal to take good care of his health; but Richelieu, out of respect for etiquette, had not dared to take his umbrella when accompanying the king, and was very much upset by the winter sun and had five attacks of intermittent fever. After being absent two months and a half, Louis returned to the camp, where he was saluted by salvos from the forts, the batteries, and the dike. He found his army stronger and the military works considerably advanced. He had left his army reduced by illness to eighteen thousand men; but owing to the recruits who had joined from the neighbouring provinces, he now found a force twenty-five thousand strong.

The whole line of circumvallation which was to cut off La Rochelle on the land side was completed and furnished with redoubts. The shore on both sides of the harbour was provided with batteries. The dike was almost finished and was defended by a sort of floating palisade formed of ships linked together. An attempt to surprise the town had failed, owing to bad generalship. But the besieged had been unable to make any sorties or to obtain any provisions; and hunger was beginning to make itself felt in their ranks. The day after his return, on the 24th of April, Louis XIII sent an envoy to call upon the besieged citizens to surrender. According to the custom of the time the summons had to be made by a herald-at-arms, but there was not one with the army and they could not even find the insignia of the office. A tabard had therefore to be prepared in a hurry, a clerk of finance put it on and went forth to play the part of a herald. The besieged refused to receive the summons. A sort of revolution had taken place in La Rochelle. The rich citizens who had hitherto governed the town were anxious to bring the siege to an end, for it was ruining their commerce and exposing them to the wrath of their king. The sailors, who were on the side of resistance, seized the power and elected one of themselves, a captain Guiton,

as mayor. Guiton was a bold corsair, of small stature, but brave and energetic. He had a splendidly furnished house, full of flags which he had taken from the ships of his enemies; he was fond of showing them and of saying from what kings and in what seas he had captured them. He was not anxious to be made mayor, but when he took possession of his office, he placed his dagger on the table in the town hall and said to his companions: "You do not know what you have done in choosing me; you had better think well about it, for it will be useless to talk to me about surrendering. If anyone mentions it I will kill him."

Another English fleet set out to relieve the blockade of La Rochelle, or at any rate to revictual the town. This fleet consisted of thirty vessels and twenty boats laden with provisions and ammunition. It was signalled on the 11th of May by three shots fired from the forts on the island of Ré. The fleet took up its station near the point of the island, opposite to La Rochelle. The besieged fired salvos as a sign of rejoicing, and very soon their ramparts were fluttering with red, white, and blue flags. The royal fleet of thirty-eight ships was divided into four squadrons which were stationed in front of the dike; behind, on the La Rochelle side, the dike was guarded by twenty-six galleys. A light English ship succeeded in passing these batteries and in reaching the harbour; she carried a captain, a native of La Rochelle on board, and he was commissioned to ask his compatriots to open a passage before their harbour, so that the ships laden with provisions might come in. The English fleet, he said, had not come to fight. The inhabitants of La Rochelle and the Protestant refugees on board the English ships begged the admiral to force the passage; he replied that he only had orders to cross to facilitate the entrance of the convoy with provisions, and that he must spare his fleet. On the 18th of May, the English ships set sail, drew close to the harbour, fired a salute, and sailed away to the open sea. The besieged, deserted by their allies, found themselves in a very critical position. One of them proposed to sacrifice himself and save the town by assassinating Richelieu. That was the way in which Orleans had formerly escaped from the duke of Guise. But he would not commit this deed unless he was certain it was not a sin. He consulted Guiton, who replied: "In such matters as this I never give advice." He asked the pastors what they thought; and they answered: "If God is going to save us it will not be by means of a crime." So he gave up the idea.

The besieged were suffering much from starvation. The rich still had provisions which they kept concealed, but others were dying of hunger. On the 26th of May they decided to drive out of the town all who were unable to fight — women, children, old men, and all who were infirm. These poor creatures made for the French camp; the soldiers, by the king's order, received them with a shower of bullets and forced them to go back to the town. The royal troops also destroyed the crops of beans which the besieged had sown at the bottom of the other side of the escarpment.

On the 1st of June some of the citizens who were anxious for peace succeeded in opening communications with Bassompierre, proposing a capitulation; but on the 10th a letter reached La Rochelle from the king of England, promising that he would see his whole fleet destroyed rather than fail to extricate the besieged from the peril they were in. They therefore broke off the negotiations and began firing again. For three months they waited for the promised help, while Richelieu continued his dike. Towards the open sea he had had long beams bound together and fixed in the ground at the bottom of the water to prevent access to the dike, and on the harbour side

[1628 A.D.]

he had placed a line of ships anchored and chained together. Every day visitors came to the royal camp, and were entertained; and sometimes, to amuse them, a skirmish was got up at which they looked on. The king went out hunting and kept his court just as if he had been in Paris.

Within La Rochelle the famine was becoming terrible. The rich were eating horses, donkeys, dogs, and cats; and even for these they had to pay well, the price of a cat being 45 livres. The poor were no longer able to go and look for dead shellfish cast up by the tide and stranded in the mud, for the guns of the besiegers made this dangerous. They had eaten up all the green stuff and were reduced to boiling pieces of leather with fat and moist sugar. Many left the town and would have given themselves up at the outposts of the royal army; but they were sent back, so that the town might not be enabled to hold out longer by having fewer mouths to feed. The soldiers would take away their clothes and then drive them back to the town with sticks or leather thongs. A great number of the inhabitants had died from illness or privation. Even those who were defending the town were so weak with hunger that they could only walk with sticks; they could hardly drag themselves along and were quite unable to bear arms. Often in the mornings sentinels were found dead of starvation at their posts. Guiton still refused to surrender. He had some of those who wished to capitulate imprisoned, and on the 22nd of July he had three or four beheaded as traitors, and their heads placed on the gates of the town. On the 9th of August the president of the presidial, an inferior court of judicature, was imprisoned in his turn. The councillors were so alarmed that two of them took refuge in the royal camp.

Louis XIII, hearing what great distress prevailed in La Rochelle, on the 16th of August sent a herald-at-arms to call upon the town to surrender. This time it was a real herald in a tabard, cap on head, sceptre in hand. Before him rode two trumpeters bearing waving pennants. They presented themselves at one of the gates and asked to see the mayor. They were kept waiting a long time; then, instead of the mayor, appeared a troop of citizens and soldiers, whose leader told the herald with an oath to go away at once, and pointed to his men's guns ready cocked for firing. The herald withdrew, placing on the ground two proclamations that he had brought with him. The English fleet, on the point of sailing, had been delayed by the murder of the duke of Buckingham. The longer the siege went on the stronger became the temptation to fly to the royal camp; and the chance of being killed seemed preferable to the certainty of being starved to death. To rid themselves of these obtrusive fugitives the besiegers adopted a cruel plan. They placed gibbets on the line of circumvallation surrounding the town and every time a group of fugitives arrived to give themselves up, they made them draw lots, and the one on whom the lot fell was hanged while the rest were sent back to the town.

On the 29th of August Guiton read the citizens a letter from the king of England saying that help was at hand. It was madness, he said, to hope for mercy from the king of France; if the town surrendered it would be sacked and the men massacred. They must stand firm as long as anyone remained alive to shut the gates. "As for me," he added, "if I am left with only one other, and without food, I shall be quite willing to draw lots to decide which of us is to eat the other." On the 3rd of September, Guiton, while speaking to the people who had assembled to hear the Sunday sermon, was interrupted by a woman crying out that her child's nurse had not tasted food for a fortnight. Guiton to appease the crowd made a

pretence of negotiating. He sent two envoys to the king, who received them fairly. But a native of La Rochelle, just arrived from England, managed to make his way into the city in broad daylight and announced that the English fleet was just setting sail; so again the negotiations were broken off. A fortnight later, on the 28th of September, an English fleet of 140 sail carrying 6,000 soldiers arrived, and taking up a position before the harbour, tried to force the passage, which was guarded by the French fleet. The French refugees asked to be allowed to manage the fire-ships which were to be sent against their king. The English wished to work them themselves, but the fire-ships proved a failure, and would not act. They waited for a favourable wind, and on the 3rd of October began firing on the fleet and batteries of the besiegers. The fighting continued for two days without much loss of life, and on the evening of the 4th the English fleet withdrew to the isle of Aix. It remained inactive for some days owing to stormy weather, and, when the wind was once more favourable, the English, instead of making an attack, sent an envoy to Richelieu.

Those inside La Rochelle, seeing they were deserted, resigned themselves to the necessity of suing for peace. Richelieu received at the same time the envoys from the town and those from the French Protestants on board the English fleet. On the 29th of October the capitulation was signed, the inhabitants of La Rochelle acknowledged the great offence of which they had been guilty, "not only in resisting the just wishes of their king, but in joining with foreigners who had taken up arms against the state." They begged the king to pardon them for this crime, and they placed their town in his hands. The king, taking into consideration "their repentance and protestations of sorrow," promised them an amnesty, the free exercise of their religion, and the restoration of any of their property which had been confiscated. The officers and nobles might leave the town wearing their swords, and the soldiers carrying white sticks, and they would then be free. On the 30th of October the French army entered La Rochelle and the garrison came out; they were reduced to seventy-four Frenchmen and sixty-two English.[j]

Richelieu showed himself clement towards La Rochelle; there was no vengeance taken, no victims were sacrificed. The town lost its independence, which was, indeed, incompatible with the idea of sovereignty; but its worship and its religious opinions were left free, "the only avowed and open toleration," says Hume[c] "which at that time was granted in any European kingdom."[d]





CHAPTER XVII

THE DICTATORSHIP OF RICHELIEU

[1629–1643 A.D.]

> Cardinal Richelieu is one of those men in whose favour the tide of affairs always turns at the critical moment, and who also have skill and courage to take it at the turn. Vigilant, cool, sagacious, and absolutely fearless, he never throughout his life missed a single point in the great game he played; and even with dramatic force knew how to snatch a triumph out of the very clutches of defeat. — KITCHIN.[40]

ARMAND JEAN DU PLESSIS, Cardinal Richelieu, grown now through the exercise of his own genius to be the mightiest man in all Europe, was born at the castle of Richelieu in Poitou, September 5th, 1585. He was therefore forty-three years old when the famous siege of La Rochelle, by which he broke the power of the Huguenots in France, was brought to a close. Chronic invalid though he was, he was destined to live fifteen years longer, and during that period to control the fortunes of France, and to exercise a dominating influence in European politics at large; to be recognised everywhere as the greatest statesman of his age. We have already seen enough of him to know that he is a man of the largest ideas, the most indomitable courage, and that he is a born master of men; we must understand also that he is the wiliest of intriguers, the shrewdest judge of human motives; that he has a taste for art and for literature; and that with it all he is not restrained from the successes of practical politics by any undue niceties of conscience. He is perhaps more similar in his mental equipment to Augustus than to any other great man of history; or let us say rather to Augustus with a certain share added of the genius of Julius Cæsar, further modified by some traits of Louis XI.

But why attempt to characterise? We shall see the great cardinal in the full exercise of these powers in the coming years. We shall see him carry war into Italy, acting as his own lieutenant-general. We shall see him take

a hand in the Thirty Years' War, and accomplish by diplomacy the overthrow of the great Wallenstein. We shall see him put down uprisings at home, triumphing over Marie de' Medici and his other enemies; holding King Louis XIII as a child in leading strings. We shall see him dominating church and state alike, and exercising a permanent influence on the literature of his land through the foundation of the French Academy. And all the while we must remember that this myriad-minded statesman is the most hated of Frenchmen at the same time that he is the most feared. Even those he has benefited do not love him. "Let the world speak well or ill of the famous cardinal," says Corneille, "neither in my prose nor in my verse will I mention his name; he has done me too much kindness to speak ill of him, and too much injury to speak well." There is none to speak well of this strange man; but all speak of him with bated breath; all contemplate him with something of apprehension. A weird, incomprehensible figure, he stalks across the scene, lonely, hated, feared,—but always masterful. Let us follow out the details of his life story.[a]

RICHELIEU AND THE KING

The history of Richelieu is obscure as to the essential point, his resources, the ways and means. On what did he live and how? This is not to be seen either in his memoirs or his documents. All that we have of Richelieu's accounts includes only four years (1636–1640) and in a very confused way gives the ordinary receipts, up to eighty millions. Not a word of anything extraordinary.

In 1636, when France was invaded, a tax on persons in comfortable circumstances (*des gens aisés*) was created, or rather regulated, and the agents placed everywhere in 1637, with the triple power of justice, police, and finance, collected it with great rigour. But one cannot doubt that something similar existed even before, especially in the passages of armies through certain provinces. Otherwise it is impossible to understand how, with such a deficit under ordinary circumstances, extraordinary and unforeseen expenditures, for wars or subsidies to allies, could have been made every year.

Hence action was variable, intermittent, sometimes brilliant, with relapses due to exhaustion. It was not possible to have a really permanent army. That was evident in 1629, when Richelieu finished the war with the Huguenots, but that with Italy was still in a critical state. He disbanded thirty regiments to raise others six months later. The same way, in 1636, he disbanded seven regiments in January to make them up again in June—an economy of five months, necessary perhaps, but which nearly lost France. In July nothing had been reorganised, and the enemy came to within twenty leagues of Paris.

The suffering of the great man of affairs who directed this machine with its spasmodic movements must have been terrible. And one can easily understand that he was always ill. The insufficiency of his resources, the continual effort to invent impossible money, on the other hand the court intrigues, the pricks of no one knows how many invisible insects, were something to keep him in a terrible agitation. But even that was not enough; twenty other devils haunted this restless soul, like a great ruined mansion—the battle of women, tardy gallantries, moreover theology and the wild desire to write, to make verses, tragedies! What tragedy could be more gloomy than his very person. Macbeth is gay in comparison. And he had attacks

of violence in which his inner fury would have strangled him, had he not like Hamlet massacred tapestries with the blows of his dagger. More often he swallowed his bitterness and fury, covered everything with the outward seeming of ecclesiastical decency. His powerlessness, his passion, turned within, worked themselves out on his body; the red iron burned his soul and he was near to death.

His greatest evil was still the king, who might escape him at any moment. Spain, the court, waited for the death of Louis XIII. His wife and his brother looked at his face every morning and hoped. Valetudinarian at the age of twenty-eight, feverish, subject to abscesses which nearly carried him off in 1630, it was in vain he claimed to be alive, to act at times and show courage; it was held that he was dead, at least that no one had need of him. It was a curious union of two invalids. The king would have thought his kingdom lost if Richelieu were wanting. Richelieu knew that, with the king dead, he had not two days to live. So well hated, especially by the king's brother, he had to plan to die with Louis XIII. Perhaps it was for that reason that he was so pleasing to the king, who was sad, suspicious, and malevolent and who never liked him, but who could always say to himself: "If I die, that man will be hanged."

This double chance of death, on which the enemies of Richelieu placed their hope, was precisely what made him strong and terrible. He had moments when he talked and acted as though in the presence of death; and then the sublime, which he had sought so laboriously elsewhere, came of itself. He touches it, in fact, in passages of allocution which he had with the king on the return from La Rochelle, in the presence of his enemies, the queen-mother and the king's confessor, the suave Jesuit Suffren. In this conversation he tells everything, his actual situation, what he has done, what received, what he owns, what he has refused. He has a patrimony of 25,000 livres rental and the king has given him six abbeys. He is obliged to make heavy expenditures, especially to pay for guards, being surrounded with daggers. He has refused 20,000 crowns pension, refused the appointments of the admiralty (40,000 francs), refused the right of admiral (100,000 crowns), refused a million which financiers had offered him in order not to be prosecuted.

He asks for his dismissal, not definitely but temporarily — he may be called back later if he is still alive and is needed. He explains clearly that he is in great danger and that he is obliged sometimes to conceal himself. Does he want to make himself necessary, declare himself indispensable, and so make sure of so much the more power? If that is his end, one must say that the method is very strange and daring. He speaks with the frankness of a man who has no end in view. He dares to give his master, perhaps as a last service, an enumeration of the faults of which the king ought to correct himself. And this was not one of those flattering satires, where one shows a slight fault, a shadow, as a successful method for showing the beauties of the portrait. No, it is a firm, hard judgment, like that of a La Bruyère, of a Saint-Simon, which would penetrate to the depths of a character after a hundred years, a judgment of the dead by a dead person. Quickness of mind and instability, suspicions and jealousy, no assiduity, no application to great things, impulsive aversions, forgetfulness of services, and ingratitude — not a trait is lacking.

The queen-mother must have trembled with indignation, with terror also, perhaps, feeling that the man who would venture such a thing would venture all — and that a man so composed, with death under his feet, would pay little

regard to the death of others. The Jesuit must have fallen backwards, plunged into silence and humility. The king felt all this and received it as the testamentary word of one invalid to another, of one dying man to another. Richelieu, being begged and entreated, remained in the ministry. It was difficult for him to retire with affairs at such a crisis. The war with the Huguenots still continued in Languedoc, and the war with Italy was commencing. Richelieu, called by the pope as well as by the duke of Mantua, had a good opportunity which might relieve him from his embarrassments. Victor at La Rochelle, if he saved Italy he might hope that the pope would appoint him legate for life as Wolsey and George d'Amboise[1] had been — real kings and more than kings, since they united the two powers, temporal and spiritual.[b]

RICHELIEU ENTERS THE EUROPEAN ARENA

France had submitted; six years of power had been sufficient for Richelieu to make himself her master; now he turned his incessant activity in the direction of Europe. "He feared the repose of peace," wrote Nani, the ambassador to Venice, "and believing himself more secure in the turmoil of arms, he was the author of many wars, and of long and weighty calamities. We may say that having reunited divided France, succoured Italy, upset the empire, harassed England, and weakened Spain, he was the instrument chosen by heaven to direct the great events of Europe."

The liberal, penetrating mind of the Venetian was not mistaken on this point; all over Europe the hand of Richelieu was felt. "Far and near, we must always negotiate," he said. He had succeeded with negotiations in France, and he carried his ideas further. Numerous treaties had already marked the first years of the cardinal's power; after 1630 his activity in external affairs was redoubled. From 1623 to 1640 seventy-four treaties were concluded by Richelieu; four with England, twelve with the United Provinces, fifteen with the German provinces, six with Sweden, twelve with Savoy, six with the Venetian Republic, three with the pope, three with the emperor, two with Spain, four with Lorraine, one with the Grison Leagues, one with Portugal, two with the rebels of Catalonia and Rousillon, one with Russia, and two with the emperor of Morocco; such was the network of diplomatic negotiation which the cardinal wove in nineteen years.

While the cardinal was holding La Rochelle in siege, the duke of Mantua died in Italy, and his natural heir, Carlo di Gonzaga, living in France as the duke de Nevers, hastened to take possession of his estates. Meanwhile the duke of Savoy claimed the marquisate of Montferrat. The Spaniards upheld him, and entering the duke of Mantua's states, lay siege to Casale. When La Rochelle fell, Casale was still resisting; but the duke of Savoy had already seized the greater part of Montferrat, and the duke of Mantua asked help of the French king, whose subject he was. This furnished a new field of battle against Spain.[c]

Nobody could understand why the cardinal thought insignificant possessions at a distance from France, like Mantua and Montferrat, were of such great importance.[2] He was obliged to explain to the king that Casale and

[1 Thomas Wolsey (1471–1530), the celebrated English cardinal, was prime minister of Henry VIII. Cardinal George d'Amboise (1460–1510) was the minister of Louis XII of France (see pp. 294 and 303).]

[2 The war in North Italy cut off Spain from the Netherlands, now that England dominated the sea. Hence the great importance of Richelieu's plan.]

[1629–1630 A.D.]

Mantua were the citadels of Italy — the most valuable military stations in the basin of the Po; and then war was decided on. Richelieu left on the 29th of December with the title of "lieutenant-general representing the person of the king." He had doffed the cardinal's robe to assume the military uniform; under him were the cardinal de La Valette, marshals Montmorency, Schomberg, and Bassompierre, with Sourdis, now archbishop of Bordeaux, as administrative lieutenant. The duke of Savoy declared himself neutral and refused to revictual Casale, though he would allow the French free passage to go to its relief. The cardinal, determined in spite of this treacherous ally to gain possession of the passes into Italy, crossed the Alps at Susa and pretended he was about to march on Turin; he then rapidly marched back and besieged Pinerolo, which capitulated (1630). Spinola hastened to the defence of Piedmont, and owing to his superior forces checked the advance of the French. Louis XIII then took the command of the army himself and conquered the whole of Savoy; but he fell ill and his place had to be taken by the duke de Montmorency, who defeated the Spaniards at Vegliana and took possession of the marquisate of Saluzzo on the 10th of July. However, Mantua had been taken and Casale was sorely pressed, the French army was reduced by sickness, reinforcements were expected from the army in Champagne and money from Paris. The latter, however, did not arrive, for the marshal De Marillac and his brother the chancellor, acting under the influence of the queen-mother, neglected to send it off. Richelieu, rendered uneasy by the intrigues of his enemies, effected a truce through the mediation of the abbé Mazarin,[1] who had been sent from the court of Rome. Mazarin, who was a man of supple and crafty temper, gained and retained the confidence of Richelieu and was destined subsequently to carry on the work which the latter had begun. At the expiration of this truce the serious events which were passing in Germany prevailed on Austria, as we shall see, to conclude a definite peace. This was the Peace of Ratisbon, concluded on the 25th of October, 1630.[d] The emperor agreed to invest the duke de Nevers and withdraw the imperial troops from his states on the Grison passes provided that France would withdraw hers from Pinerolo and Savoy.[a]



RICHELIEU

[1 Giulio Mazarini, born at Piscina, Italy, July 14th, 1602; died at Vincennes, France, March 9th, 1661. He was to be Richelieu's successor and scarcely his inferior in power.]

ENMITY OF MARIE DE' MEDICI AGAINST RICHELIEU

The termination of war was the commencement of new perils for Richelieu. He foresaw the fresh efforts of his enemies, and on the return of the court to Paris, he used all the resources of his address to avert and conciliate the resentment of the queen-mother. She dissembled, and did not forgive. Leagued with the Marillacs, and favoured by many of the nobility, Marie laboured to overturn the minister, who defended himself with firmness and adroitness. Louis XIII was of a feeble mind, still more enfeebled by a weak temperament and languid constitution. Resolution was a state above his powers; it was to him an unnatural tension, menacing at each instant a relapse.

Despite of this, he was clear-sighted. He loved France, was alive to its glory and prosperity, and saw that it required the strong hand of Richelieu to govern and to guide. He did not love the minister, indeed; and it was thus the more to his credit that he upheld him from a sense of his talents and utility. When Marie poured into his ear complaints against the cardinal's insolence, against his tyranny and domineering ambition, Louis allowed that she was right. He acquiesced; and the queen-mother argued from this passive assent that the king shared her aversion and her views against the minister. She would hurry home to her palace of the Luxembourg after such interviews, and confidently assure her followers that her ascendency was complete, that the fall of Richelieu was near. By that hour, however, Richelieu was closeted with the monarch, was unfolding to him his high and masterly views of policy, was exposing the selfish manœuvres of Marie de' Medici; and had at length gained in his turn such complete ascendency that the feeble Louis would not only assent, but kindle up for the moment with warmth and friendship towards his minister, and then, in confidence, betray the very secrets of his mother's converse with him. Richelieu thus drew from a certain source the hopes, the plans, and the names of his enemies.

The Day of Dupes

In an interview with his mother, Louis, assenting to the justice of all her complaints against the cardinal, had proposed that his niece first, and then Richelieu himself, should come publicly and ask pardon of Marie at the Luxembourg. The king intended this as a measure of conciliation. The queen accepted it for the sake of seeing her enemy humbled. Accordingly, on the appointed day, Madame de Combalet, the cardinal's niece, entered, and flung herself at the feet of Marie, imploring her forgiveness. The latter, instead of preserving the disdain that suited her purpose, or of assuming the air of forgiveness that the king desired, was unable to contain her temper, and burst forth in invectives against the suppliant lady. Madame de Combalet retreated, terrified and in tears. The cardinal himself succeeded, equally suppliant, and was received by the same volley of coarse vituperation. Louis XIII, scrupulous in his ideas of dignity and delicacy, shocked at the conduct of his mother, took the part of his minister, and reproved her; but at the same time bade Richelieu, in the same tone of anger, to retire.[e]

Everyone was convinced of the cardinal's disgrace; it was already satirised on the Pont Neuf, and the little porter of the Samaritaine indulged in a thousand grimaces in imitation of his eminence. At the palace all minds were occupied with the approaching triumph of M. de Marillac, lord keeper of the

[1630 A.D.]

great seal and fairly popular with the parliament on account of his being known to be for the interests of the queen-mother and Gaston of Orleans.

Already presidents in caps, councillors in scarlet robes, deliberated amongst themselves whether it would be made a criminal action to prosecute his eminence as guilty of tyranny and peculation. The ambassadors, watching the smallest diplomatic step in Paris, announced the inevitable disgrace of Cardinal Richelieu to their courts, and the increasing authority of the queen-mother. The *Mémoires†* relate that Charles I, so ardent a promoter of royal prerogative, replied to the despatch of his ambassador: "The king of France is making a great mistake in disgracing a minister of so great competency."

Louis XIII had set out for Versailles, that poverty-stricken palace he was too parsimonious to restore, and had there sequestered himself. A great concourse of people filled the apartments of Marie de' Medici; the crowd surrounded her and Gaston of Orleans; power was about to pass into their hands. The queen-mother, smiling graciously, affectionately held the hand of Anne of Austria, with whom she conversed amicably. They treated each other as mother and daughter, although Anne of Austria, intensely proud of her noble Spanish blood, considered herself superior to a member of the princely and mercantile house of Florence. The court wore a new aspect; it was thought that the days of the regency would be reproduced and Marshal de Marillac, then with the army of Italy, seemed a new Concini destined to enjoy the favours of Marie de' Medici. But the queen-mother was not sufficiently energetic. Naturally of an indolent disposition, she easily yielded to the Italian *far niente*, to that nerveless temperament which prevented her from prompt decision in decisive circumstances. She did not join her son at Versailles, but remained to be congratulated by the crowd of courtiers that surrounded her.

During this time the friends of Richelieu were becoming uneasy. Cardinal de la Valette, that devoted prelate, had gone with all speed to Versailles, and had had his arrival announced to the king. The cardinal had been informed by Saint-Simon, the diminutive equerry and favourite, that Louis XIII had spoken of his minister in terms that did not lead one to suppose he was out of favour. La Valette was immediately ushered into the king's presence and the king smilingly said to him, "Cousin, I think you are surprised at all that is taking place." "Sire, more than your majesty can imagine." "Well, cousin, return to Cardinal Richelieu and tell him that he is a good minister, and I desire him to come instantly." The minister's friend did not wait to be told a second time. Richelieu, who had retired to a small house in the village of Versailles, immediately hastened to the old palace. The interview took place in the presence of Saint-Simon, the first equerry, and the marquis de Mortemart, the first gentleman of the household. Richelieu, throwing himself on his knees, his customary attitude, thanked the king in humble and submissive terms for the favour he was conferring upon him. Louis showed himself kindly and affable. "Cousin, in you I possess the most faithful and loving servant it were possible to find. I consider myself the more obliged to protect you that I am cognisant of the respect and gratitude you bear the queen, my mother. I would have forsaken you, had you not shown these evidences of your generous nature. Be assured henceforth of my protection. I shall know how to disperse the cabal of your enemies; they abuse the credulity of the queen, my mother, who permits herself to be easily prejudiced. Continue to serve me faithfully, and I will uphold you against all those who have vowed your destruction." "Sire," replied

Richelieu, "solitude is a necessity to me, and I will never remain at your court against the desire of the queen-mother." "Cousin, it is not my mother that you need fear, but certain mischief-making spirits about her; I know them and I promise you they will do nothing."[b] Thus the great cardinal triumphed, while his enemies were rejoicing at his supposed overthrow. The day when the queen-mother and her coterie were thus deceived — the 11th of November, 1630 — has passed into history as the "Day of Dupes."[a]

Exile of Marie de' Medici

The popular feeling was nevertheless against Richelieu and in favour of Marie de' Medici, whose munificence and fête-loving habits had won the good will of the Parisians. This had no small weight in detaining the king at St. Germain, where he held his court, and where the two queens appeared, although Louis scarcely spoke to them. Marie bore disgrace and contempt with impatience; but she could now find no one hardy enough to brave the cardinal and espouse her quarrel, except Gaston, her second son, the rash and weak duke of Orleans. The prince imagined a singular mode of vengeance. Accompanied by a body of young and armed companions, he entered the cardinal's palace, came rudely into his presence, and apostrophised him in a rough and menacing speech. After this bootless outrage, Gaston retired, left the capital, and proceeded to levy troops in the provinces. Louis, on learning this sally of his brother, whom he peculiarly disliked, took up the cause of his minister more warmly; and attributing, not unjustly, the turbulence of Gaston to their mother, he openly reproached her, and warned her to become reconciled to Richelieu. Marie would not abandon her hate; and monarch and minister were obliged to proceed to extremities.

It required much address to bring the king to this point; and Richelieu was only enabled to reconcile Louis to use harsh measures towards his parent by means of the confessors whom he himself had provided for his master. These smoothed away the difficulties presented by the king's conscience, or rather by his filial habits. Some months passed in vain attempts at accommodation; but the ultimate result was the flight of Gaston and of Marie de' Medici out of the kingdom. The latter retired to Brussels. Thus Richelieu came triumphant from the second struggle. Bassompierre was sent to the Bastille; the duke of Guise[1] was deprived of his office of admiral, and went on a pilgrimage to Rome. Even the proud and veteran Épernon was obliged to crave pardon. The parliament objected to an ordinance of the king declaring the partisans of Gaston guilty of high treason. They rightly argued that such a condemnation could not be issued without trial or by other than a judge. But even from this just position they were compelled to recede. They were summoned to the Louvre; their edict of objection was cancelled in the presence of Louis and his minister, and the obnoxious ordinance registered in its stead. Richelieu showed a still more culpable contempt for the forms of justice in the trial of the marshal De Marillac. He was brought before a commission, which sat in the cardinal's country-house at Ruel, accused of a long list of crimes, of all save his true fault of conspiring with Marie de' Medici. Being convicted, he was beheaded in the place de Grève.

Marillac was the second victim sacrificed to the supremacy of the minister. The desire of vengeance and of blood grows, like other criminal

[1 Charles IV, duke of Guise. He died in exile in Italy in 1640.]

tastes, upon those who indulge and gratify it; and Richelieu stained deeply his high reputation. Hitherto the nobility bore the tyrannic ascendency of the cardinal with jealousy and impatience. They saw plainly that his designs were directed against their power and independence. Still, from want of union, and from the absence of a spirit amongst them capable of coping with their great enemy, they held back, in trembling though indignant submission, looked on while their chains were preparing, and even aided to forge them. Thus they had helped to put down the Huguenots, ever the mainstay of rebellion. They then, when too late, sought to intrigue with Marie de' Medici against the cardinal. The trial of Marillac, not by his peers but by a mock commission, and the execution of that marshal on no grounds save enmity to the minister, filled all the noblesse with fresh indignation and alarm. And one who, from birth and position, might well take the lead of the high-born of France in this its cause, declared himself unhesitatingly on this occasion.



A FRENCH GALLANT, FIRST HALF OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE REVOLT OF GASTON AND THE EXECUTION OF MONTMORENCY

The duke de Montmorency was governor of Provence. He had distinguished himself in the Italian war; had never been foremost to complain or to intrigue; but, like his family, had been remarked for moderate and independent principles; tolerant though orthodox in religion; a loyal subject though no fawning courtier. In the king's extreme illness, he had given his word to protect the minister, and Richelieu had other causes of gratitude.

But Montmorency was now indignant at the insult offered to his rank in the person of Marillac. He felt it equally a shame that the king's brother, the son of Henry IV, should be driven into exile by the enmity of an upstart minister. Gaston had fled to Lorraine, and there passed his time in the wooing and espousal of the duke's daughter. Richelieu advanced to Lorraine, and Gaston was obliged to fly. He applied to Montmorency for protection and support, and the duke was both imprudent and generous enough to grant it. This could be done with arms alone. The dukes of Orleans and Montmorency therefore raised a little army, cantoned themselves in Languedoc, and resolved to fight the royal forces, which under Schomberg advanced against them. It appears that the population of the south looked with disfavour on the enterprise of the dukes, either in dread of Richelieu's power and vengeance, or in dislike of the aristocratic cause. The issue of the rebellion was decided in a skirmish at Castelnaudary, where Montmorency, at the head of five hundred followers, charged the royalists, and was taken prisoner. The news of his capture dispersed his army, and left Gaston no resource but to join his mother at Brussels.

It was now in the power of Richelieu to give an example of his moderation. In pardoning Montmorency, he would have gained many hearts; nor would his power have been less formidable. Gaston even promised to submit, if his generous protector were spared: but Richelieu was inexorable; he knew what would be his own fate if overthrown. He recollected the fall of Ancre, of every favourite and minister whom the nobles had overthrown; and private reasons of vindictiveness concurred with the wish of making a striking example, and by the death of Montmorency giving the same salutary warning to his order as the execution of Biron had proved in the last reign. Richelieu had the power of communicating his own firmness to the king. Louis resisted the supplications of all the nobles of his court, of the princess of Condé, Montmorency's sister, and even the clamours of the mob, who cried under the windows of the Louvre for mercy. The marshal De Châtillon begged the king to show himself to the people, and to grant to their prayers the life of the first noble of the land. "Should I obey the suggestions of the rabble, I should not act as a king," replied Louis, displaying that extreme of monarchic arrogance which his posterity so deeply cherished and so dearly expiated. The kingdom's safety might have been an excuse for cruelty — the pride of the monarch was none.

Montmorency owned his crime, and promised to redeem the disloyalty of a moment by devoting his after life to the king; but he made no mean submissions. In passing to the place of execution, he regarded the statue of Henry IV with emotion. He was the godson of that monarch, who knew how to unite clemency with firmness. But, shaking off thoughts of the past, he pointed onward to the scaffold, which he said was the surest road to heaven. In him perished the last of the lineal descendants of the great constable, the most illustrious of which were still said to be only the younger branch of that noble family.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

As soon as Richelieu felt assured that the political dissensions of France herself would no longer obstruct his plans abroad, he marched with firm step to that weakening of Spain and upsetting of the empire of which Nani speaks. Henry IV and Queen Elizabeth, in pursuit of the same ends, had sought and found the same allies. But Richelieu had better luck than they for the execution of his designs to run across the king of Sweden.[t]

Gustavus Adolphus was young, active, bellicose and surrounded by a military halo which permitted him to be looked upon as a future champion of Germany against the house of Austria. He had had several clashes with the emperor or his lieutenants over the Baltic towns, and the idea occurred to Richelieu to make use of his sword.[l]

Richelieu arranged a truce between the young king and the Poles with whom he was at war, in September, 1629; he then granted him by the Treaty of Berwald, in January, 1631, a subsidy of 1,200,000 francs, and threw him at Germany, pointing out, to excite his ardour, the immense booty to be seized, his co-religionists to be avenged, and the great rôle to be played on a brilliant stage.

The Thirty Years' War was then at its height.[1] This struggle, both religious and political, began in Bohemia in 1618, and had extended little by little over the empire. The elector-palatine and the king of Denmark

[1 For the detailed history of the Thirty Years' War, see vol. XIII.]

[1630–1634 A.D.]

(Christian IV) had been, one after the other, vanquished and humiliated. The imperial army created and commanded by Wallenstein had penetrated as far as the Baltic, crushing under foot on its way, both Germany and her secular liberties. The oft-discussed problem of that country — that is, its partition among independent princes or its union under a single master, was on the point of being solved in favour of unity under the despotism of the house of Austria. Cardinal though he was, Richelieu acted like Francis I, like Henry II, and like Henry IV ; he undertook the cause of the German princes without regard to their religion. His confidential agent, Father Joseph, managed the electors so well at the diet of Ratisbon in 1630, that they wrung from the emperor the recall of Wallenstein and the disbandment of his army, after which they refused to give the emperor's son the title of king of the Romans, which Ferdinand II regarded as the implied price of these concessions. "A miserable Capuchin," he cried in anger, "has been clever enough to put six electoral hats into his cowl."

Gustavus Adolphus fell upon the empire like a thunderbolt. He invented new tactics which disconcerted his adversaries. He defeated Tilly near Leipsic, killed him at the passage of the Lech, but was killed himself at Lützen (November 8th, 1632). "The world is for others," he cried, as he fell. Richelieu picked up the hope and the fortune of the young hero. He was now free from all domestic anxiety and could employ his attention and his strength abroad. He boldly substituted in the struggle against the Austrian house, for exhausted Denmark and for Sweden bereft of her king, France full of youth and ardour.[4]

Richelieu still upheld his alliance with Sweden and the Protestant powers ; and thus keeping the force of Austria employed, he was enabled to effect his next ambitious project, which was the occupation of Lorraine.

That province was in its origin feudatory to the empire, and was totally independent of France, except that from vicinity and interest its dukes were far more French than German. The Guises had drawn these ties closer. And now that the duke of Lorraine had harboured the duke of Orleans, and, against the king's consent, had given him his daughter Margaret in marriage, the latter had reason or pretext for anger. Richelieu, as usual, caused an army, with the king at its head, to march to Lorraine. The duke was alarmed, and sought to parry the attack by offering to espouse Madame de Combalet, niece of the cardinal ; but Richelieu refused to sacrifice the interests of the state to the aggrandisement of his family. Perhaps he saw in the offer a trap laid for him. Lorraine was invaded ; and Nancy, its capital, besieged. The duchess of Orleans contrived to escape from it to Brussels ; but Nancy fell into the power of the king. In vain did the duke negotiate, and make submissions ; equally in vain did he resign his duchy in favour of his brother. The capital and fortresses were held in firm possession by Richelieu.

Here fell another noble, or rather an independent prince, from having espoused the quarrel of the duke of Orleans. Whilst the queen-mother gave signs of increased exasperation, by suborning an attempt to carry off the cardinal's niece, Gaston began to be weary of exile. His favourite, Puylaurens, who had chief influence with him, was still more anxious ; and Richelieu offered great advantages to the latter, if he would induce the prince to submit. Gaston at length did so, quitted Brussels abruptly, and repaired to Paris, where he was graciously and splendidly received. Puylaurens received the hand of the cardinal's niece, and was created duke d'Aiguillon for his services. But Richelieu was a dangerous friend, except to an all-devoted servant. He sought to break Gaston's marriage ; and Gaston was obstinate in resisting.

The cardinal laid the blame on the new duke d'Aiguillon, and without further pretext arrested and shut him up in the Bastille, where he soon after perished Gaston was, as usual, enraged; and, as usual, allowed his rage to evaporate in vain menaces, and in vainer enterprises.

Wars with Austria

The nobles checked, the Huguenot power destroyed, it remained to abase still lower the house of Austria, and to extend the territories of France at its expense. To make the Rhine the limit of the empire was the darling aim of Richelieu, as of Henry IV. Gustavus Adolphus and the Protestant princes of Germany had hitherto been instruments in Richelieu's hand to effect or further this; but, since the death of the king of Sweden, the emperor had recovered his superiority, had defeated the Swedes, and reduced his enemies. It behooved France no longer to confine her efforts to negotiation; but to draw the sword, if she wished to preserve her ascendency or to prosecute her political schemes. She demanded certain advantages for thus declaring herself; and neither Sweden nor the malcontent Germans were backward in paying the price. Oxenstierna, the Swedish chancellor, ceded the fortress of Philippsburg to France. The league of Protestants put the whole of Alsace and its important fortresses under her protection. Lorraine was already occupied; and now Richelieu pushed northwards, and garrisoned Treves, forming, at the same time, a defensive alliance with Holland. Spain, informed of this treaty, sent an expedition to surprise the town of Treves; and war was in consequence declared by France against the emperor and the king of Spain, in the commencement of 1635. A herald was sent to Brussels to announce it; the last time that this species of feudal etiquette was observed.

Richelieu, the destroyer of the Huguenots, was thus leagued with the Protestant powers of Europe against its Catholic princes — a clear proof that his principles were politic, not bigoted. This war, which lasted thirteen years against the emperor and twenty-five against Spain, produced little glory to the minister, at least from its victories, and has brought as little interest to history.[1] It is marked by as much want of spirit as of talent. Yet the Thirty Years' War in Germany, then drawing to its close, was marked with both. But religious differences had given ferocity to this war, which was carried on in the heart of Germany, and which put daily at stake the fate of kingdoms, capitals, and creeds. On the other hand, the war which we enter on was merely an extended line of frontier skirmishes, idle sieges, and fitful expeditions, in which Richelieu had the advantage, not from military but ministerial superiority. His vigorous administration enabled France to bear the expense and weight of the war, whilst the house of Austria, from the bad husbandry of more immense resources, became exhausted, and towards the close of it was in a tottering state. As to the lack of able generals, it may be observed that great military talent must necessarily be wanting at the commencement of a war, and that it requires half a score of years' campaigning for the age and the nation to form its military system anew — the old never sufficing — and to find for that system a head and an arm capable of directing it. Turenne was a young officer at this epoch. It was not till the following reign that he and Condé were able to assert the superiority of French generalship.

[1 As regards what was done by French armies. But of course the allies entered constantly into Richelieu's plans.]

[1635–1636 A.D.]

France entered on the campaign with four armies — one in the Low Countries, one on the Rhine, the others in Italy, and the Valtelline. The first exploit was one of promise and éclat. The marshal De Brézé was marching to join the Dutch through the country of Liège. Prince Thomas of Savoy, at the head of the Spanish, sought to prevent the junction. He was defeated by Brézé at Avein, and lost all his cannon and colours. Tirlemont was given up to the pillage of the victors. Louvain was besieged, and Brussels threatened. The unfortunate Marie de' Medici was obliged to fly from the latter town, with the duchess of Orleans, pursued by the good fortune of her enemy Richelieu. Chance, however, may give a victory; talents can alone make the most of it. The French were obliged to retire behind the Maas. They and the Dutch, most ill-assorted allies, laid the blame of tardiness upon each other.

In the following year the imperialists had all the advantage. They penetrated into Picardy, passed the Somme, and took Corbie. Paris was in alarm, and her citizens began to retire southward. It was a critical moment for Richelieu. His ascendency over the king consisted solely in the monarch's opinion of his sagacity and good fortune as minister. This opinion was greatly shaken; yet Richelieu kept a good countenance, and did all that the emergency required. He made the king show himself to the people; he despatched reinforcements to the count de Soissons, who commanded in Picardy. The Spanish knew as little as the French how to push an advantage. Instead of advancing upon the capital, they passed the time in pillaging, and were soon obliged to retreat. The court advanced to Amiens, whilst the army besieged and endeavoured to retake Corbie.

ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE THE CARDINAL

Here Richelieu's good fortune saved him from new peril. The count de Soissons, son of that prince of the blood whose turbulence made him conspicuous in the first year of the regency of Marie de' Medici, had stepped from the obscurity in which he had been kept, on the unexpected invasion of his government by the enemy. He had valiantly resisted; but the cardinal, who dreaded the renown of a prince of the blood, avoided placing any large force at his disposal, and at length brought the king himself to command and eclipse Soissons. The count vowed vengeance; he leagued with Gaston, ever ready to commence a plot; and they agreed to assassinate the cardinal at Amiens. Two gentlemen, named Saint-Ibal and Montrésor, were charged with the execution, but were to wait for the signal to be given by the duke of Orleans. An opportunity offered. Richelieu was alone at the foot of his staircase, which he had descended to his carriage, and in the midst of the conspirators. The agents had their hands on pistols, eagerly watching the countenances of both the count de Soissons and the duke of Orleans for the signal. Neither had the courage to give it, and Richelieu walked on; for the moment he was unsuspicious of the danger that he had escaped.

On reflection, the princes saw that the danger lay in having meditated the deed, rather than in having executed it. They tried other means, leagued with the Spaniards, and endeavoured to rouse the nobility to rebel. Épernon, to whom they chiefly applied, bade them, in answer, recollect the fate of Marillac and Montmorency. They did so, and fled from court; the count de Soissons to Sedan, and Gaston to Blois. But the latter was soon brought back by fair words.

CHARACTER OF LOUIS

In the midst of these intrigues, this warfare, these struggles betwixt nations and parties, Louis XIII was perhaps the personage who felt the least interested. "He led," says Madame de Motteville,[1] "the most wretched and sad life; without court, or friends, or power; spending his time in catching birds, whilst his armies were taking towns." He was plaintive, melancholy, retiring; not wanting either in good sense or in any other manly quality, perhaps, but cursed with a diffidence that neutralised them all. Thus he despaired of ever finding another minister like Richelieu; and, in fear of offending the cardinal, whom he might have controlled as well as employed, he resigned all authority into his hands. Another idea of his, proceeding from the same diffidence, and a great cause of discontent and sadness with him, was that he despaired to render himself agreeable to the fair sex. He was cursed with a bashfulness and a backwardness that he blushed to avow, and that he concealed under the colour of apathy and suspicion. This kept Louis XIII for a number of years a stranger to his young and not unlovely queen; as the same defect produced, in after years, a similar result with his descendant, Louis XVI. Anne of Austria, piqued by this coldness of her spouse, avenged herself by ridicule and sarcasm. The king's indifference or distance thus became hatred; and Richelieu, who had cause to dread the young queen, fanned the latter sentiment. Louis nevertheless felt attracted towards female society, and he paid a kind of distant and formal court to Mademoiselle de Hautefort. This young lady as little understood his bashful and susceptible temper as did the queen, and Louis soon accused them both of leaguing together to mock him. The attentions of the king were then turned towards a new object, Mademoiselle de la Fayette, with whom the novel of De Genlis has perhaps rendered the reader familiar. She, of tenderer feelings and more penetration, knew how to appreciate the timid affections of the monarch. She cherished and returned them; never, however, overstepping the bounds of modesty. Louis, whose reserve, or "wisdom," to use the words of Madame de Motteville,[1] "equalled that of the most modest dame," at length ventured to propose an apartment at Versailles to Mademoiselle de la Fayette, who replied, after some hesitation, some intrigue, and certain interference, by retiring to a convent. The king wept, and was in despair; but his scruples would not permit him, like Louis XIV, to tear a beauty from the altar. He did not cease, however, to visit Mademoiselle de la Fayette at her convent; and long conversations were wont to pass between them through the *grille* or iron railing of the parlour.



A FRENCH GENTLEMAN, TIME OF LOUIS XIII

The monarch felt the influence of this virtuous young woman; her counsels, to which her piety now gave weight and her secure position boldness, prompted him to mistrust Richelieu, whom she represented as supporting heresy against Catholicism, and to give peace to Europe.

Another voice, of equal weight with the king, was pouring the same sentiments into his ear. This was his confessor, the father Caussin, whom Richelieu had placed in that station, but who betrayed his confidence. To resist at once a mistress and a confessor was difficult, and the influence of the minister began to totter. One urgent counsel given to Louis by Mademoiselle de la Fayette and Caussin was that he should become reconciled to his queen; they showed, and even proved to him, that his suspicions against her were unjust. Richelieu, who observed the changed sentiments of the king towards Anne of Austria, was alarmed, and tried to prevent the reconciliation that he feared. Suspecting that the queen held a correspondence with Spain, he caused the police to visit and search her apartments at the Val de Grace. But his enemies were too adroit: no discovery was made, and the insult served but to display the unfounded rancour of the cardinal. After this the pious and generous voice of Mademoiselle de la Fayette had more influence; and, obedient to it, Louis XIII became reconciled for the time to his queen. The happy and unexpected consequence was the birth of a prince (afterwards Louis XIV) on the 5th of September following (1638). To this, however, the result was limited. Richelieu regained his ascendency over the king; the confessor was banished; Mademoiselle de la Fayette forgotten; and the queen, though no longer banished from the king's presence, had as little share as before of his influence or friendship.

The fresh hold which Richelieu here took of the monarch's confidence was owing, in a great measure, to the success of the war. In the beginning of the campaign two actions were fought at Rheinfelden, in the first of which the gallant duke de Rohan perished; in the second, the duke of Saxe Weimar defeated the imperials, and took their two generals, one of whom, the famous Johann von Werth, was sent to Paris. The principal consequence of this victory was the conquest of Breisach, the chief fortress of Alsace. The name of the town reminds us again of the celebrated Father Joseph, a Capuchin friar, the follower and confidant of Richelieu. We can scarcely imagine a statesman and an ambassador clothed in a monk's frock and sandals: yet such was Father Joseph, a name more or less mingled in all the intrigues of the French court, and its negotiations with others. His influence was known, and he was dreaded by the court as a kind of evil spirit, in fact the demon of Richelieu. Although the latter never procured for his monkish friend the cardinal's hat which he demanded, still the people called Father Joseph his "gray eminence," at once to distinguish him from and assimilate him to his "red eminence" the cardinal. They had been friends from youth; congenial spirits in ambition, depth, and talent: the monk, however, sacrificed his personal elevation to that of the cardinal. Richelieu was much indebted to him: it was Joseph that roused and encouraged him, when stupefied and intimidated by the invasion of Picardy; and it has been claimed that after his death Richelieu showed neither the same firmness nor sagacity.[1]

[1 Kitchin's estimate of Father Joseph seems a just one. He says: "It is impossible to say with the Italians, that Richelieu owed everything to him; that Father Joseph not only strengthened him in all the crises of his fortune and gave him wise advice, but that he even invented his policy for him, and supplied him with ideas; yet we must admit that Richelieu owed more to him than to any other person, and that he was thrice happy in such an agent and friend. Yet the difference between them is great: Father Joseph lives in history as an able intriguer; Richelieu as a king among men."]

When Father Joseph was on his death-bed, Richelieu stood by it: it was a scene such as a novelist might love to paint. The conversation of the two ecclesiastics was still of this world; and the cardinal's last exhortation to the expiring monk was, "Courage, Father Joseph, Breisach is ours!" a form of consolation characteristic of both.

REVOLT OF THE COUNT DE SOISSONS (1641 A.D.)

The count de Soissons, on the failure of his scheme against the cardinal, had taken refuge with the duke de Bouillon in Sedan. All the enemies of the latter, especially the exiles, looked towards this prince of the blood as the rallying-point, the support of their cause. Richelieu employed every art to pacify the count, remove his distrust, and entice him to court. All efforts proved vain; and Richelieu was even obliged to purchase the tranquillity of Soissons, and tolerate his independent posture. It was dangerous, however, to let such an example of disobedience subsist; and the cardinal at length sent an army, under the marshal De Châtillon, to reduce Sedan, and take or humble the count de Soissons. Châtillon was both valorous and skilful; but nothing could compensate for the ill humour and backwardness of the troops, who, with their officers, felt more inclined to a gallant prince of the blood than to the domineering cardinal. In an action that took place at La Marfee, near Sedan, the royal troops showed neither alacrity nor determination; and Châtillon, despite his efforts, was completely put to the rout. No obstacle seemed now to prevent the count de Soissons from marching to Paris, when the almost miraculous good fortune of Richelieu saved him from ruin. As Soissons rode over the field of battle, he pushed up his visor with his pistol: it was accidentally discharged, and the victor perished. Report did not fail to say that he was assassinated, and, of course, by the order of Richelieu; but there is no evidence to support such a rumour. Louis, who, on receiving tidings of the defeat, was preparing, with equanimity, to sacrifice the obnoxious minister, was now struck with his unvarying good fortune; and, with a superstitious feeling, bowed still lower to the cardinal's will. The count did not share the monarch's insensibility to

[illegible] OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF RICHELIEU

[illegible] Louis XIII as the politician who, [illegible] at [illegible] and finally sub- [illegible] ascendency in [illegible] administrator [illegible] as well as what [illegible] gave deep [illegible] suffer the work of [illegible] interrupted by the [illegible] undertaking in his [illegible] which, having [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

that time, because it alone could bring about and maintain unity in France. The kingship, elevated into a living symbol of the national welfare and of the best interests of the country, became a sort of rampart behind which Louis XIII's minister, with indomitable energy, and with that breadth of mind which characterises a great man, carried on for eighteen years the work of monarchical centralisation. What he accomplished during this immortal dictatorship, in the midst of constantly recurring difficulties, is almost incredible. By destroying Protestantism as a political power, Richelieu made a distinct advance towards unity in the state. He gave a very essential bond of union to the higher administration by establishing the council of state, which remained practically unaltered till 1789. He rendered the triumph of monarchical authority over the new feudalism a certainty by lessening the excessive authority which the provincial governors had arrogated to themselves, by establishing resident overseers, who were energetic and obedient servants of the king, in various parts of the country to see that the law was properly administered, that the police were properly organised, and that the interests of the state in financial matters were not neglected; by commanding fortified places to be destroyed; and finally by his treatment of the most important members of the aristocracy as well as of the royal family, whom he punished or even banished when necessary, thus showing that the sword of the law was long enough to reach any head, however highly placed.

He obliged the parliament to keep strictly within the limits of its own judicial functions, and forbade its taking any part whatever in the management of public affairs. He maintained a perpetual struggle against provincial institutions, whose resistance, usually self-interested and unjust, tended continually to fetter the action of the central power. But though he abolished the power of all enemies of the royal prerogative, Richelieu himself was capable of holding very wide and liberal views. If he destroyed Protestantism as a political party, he rose above the religious prejudices of his time by adhering strictly to the terms of the treaties which had been concluded with the Protestants, and by fearlessly bestowing his favours and his confidence on many of them. If he compelled the nobility to renounce their claims to independence, he opened up to them new paths to fortune and power, he enabled them to engage in maritime commerce without any loss of dignity, he admitted them to the royal councils, and he founded schools for them. In short, he wished them to take the lead in the country by superiority of culture as well as of wealth. If he failed to assemble the states-general, he nevertheless did not claim to be independent of public opinion; he frequently summoned assemblies of important people and explained to them, in patriotic language, his great projects for the good of the country; he more than once took for his text the resolutions presented to the states of 1640 by the commons. Lastly, he created one of the most powerful engines of modern civilisation, the periodical press, by authorising the publication, under his patronage, of Renaudot's *Gazette*.

Absorbed as he was by all these plans and preoccupations, Richelieu nevertheless found time to effect important improvements in all the public services. The statute of January, 1629, drawn up under the direction of Marillac, the keeper of the seals, summarises and completes the great statutes of the sixteenth century, and must be regarded as the most important attempt at codification previous to the time of Louis XIV. A stricter enforcement of police regulations increased the public security, whilst the numerous hospitals and benevolent institutions of all kinds founded at this time greatly ameliorated the condition of the labouring classes. Nor were manufactures, agricul-

ture, and internal commerce neglected. Richelieu encouraged the formation of many companies whose object was to turn to account all the riches of the soil; he had the canal of Briare, begun in the time of Henry IV, finished, and he made wise regulations respecting the taxation of the common people and the allowance of provisions to be given to the troops, which improved the condition of the rural population. He was the creator of military administration; he gave France a merchant navy and a military navy, he organised consulates, concluded commercial treaties with Russia, Persia, Morocco, etc., and did much to encourage early French colonial enterprise. Literature, science, and the arts were also in a flourishing condition during this period. The special patronage accorded by Richelieu to artists and men of letters, whom he extricated from the precarious and humiliating position they had previously occupied; the creation of the French Academy,[1] the re-organisation of the Sorbonne, the foundation of the royal botanical gardens, of the royal press, and of the mint, prove how large a share in the striking development of the national genius which took place during his time may justly be claimed by the great cardinal.

It is difficult to believe that one single man can have carried out successfully so many plans whilst at the same time laying the foundations of internal prosperity and of political ascendency in Europe, and that amid such difficulties as no other statesman has ever succeeded in surmounting. And what makes all this the more wonderful was the frailty of the body which contained this invincible spirit, and which was liable to be prostrated by illness at any moment. Although Richelieu's health was extremely delicate, and he was constantly falling ill, this extraordinary man seemed able to make his body obey his mind. He usually went to bed at eleven o'clock, and would sleep for three or four consecutive hours; then he would do some writing himself or dictate to a secretary till about six o'clock, at which time he would go to sleep again till between seven and eight, when he rose. Avenel has clearly proved that Richelieu kept some confidential secretaries night and day about his person, but that he had no offices. The secretaries of state, who were nothing more than his head clerks, used to come for his orders, get the necessary work done in their own offices, bring it when required to the prime minister for his inspection, and then signed the documents themselves. Richelieu only signed what was written in his own study. Father Joseph himself does not seem to have been permitted, any more than were the secretaries, the privilege of supervising the minutes signed by the cardinal. The latter wished everything to be seen and done by himself. To our thinking, nothing more striking could be conceived than the picture of this statesman fighting against sleep and death for every moment of his existence, in order to consecrate it to the glory of France.

What is specially characteristic of Richelieu, and gives him a distinct position among the founders of unity in France, is the clearness and the grandeur of his projects. Without foreseeing all the results of his system, results which he would no doubt have been unwilling to accept, he inaugurated with power and splendour that last social phase which the modern world was to pass through, before the light of a new era should shine upon it. Raising the kingship above family ties, and above all the traditions of

[1 Richelieu formally created the ever afterward famous *Académie Française* in the year 1635. Its membership was (and is) limited to forty, — the "forty immortals." Its object was to control the French language, and regulate the literary taste of the people. Its influence has been extraordinary; but the wisdom of attempting to dam up the stream of so limpid a medium as language may be questioned. Membership in the Academy continues to be the highest honour that can be offered a French man of letters. See below, chapter xxi.]

precedent, he detached from it all foreign elements, and, isolating it within its own sphere, as a pure idea, he made it the living personification of the public welfare and the best interests of the nation. Thanks to this formidable weapon he broke away definitely from the traditions of the Middle Ages, and caused French society to enter once for all on the path of civil unity and equality. From the time of Louis the Fat to that of Louis XIV, the kingship had always pursued the mission which providence seemed to have laid upon it, to draw towards the shadow of the throne all the varied and inimical forces which divided the country between them; but there had been unfortunate intervals when it seemed almost as if the spirit of disaffection and anarchy would finally prevail, as happened after the reigns of Philip the Fair, Charles V, Louis XI, and after the death of Henry IV. From the time of Richelieu, the work of monarchical centralisation met with no further check. The kingship, having reached the height to which this great minister had raised it, was only to descend from that position in order to make way for a still wider and more productive form of government.

THE CHURCH AND THE STATE UNDER RICHELIEU

Two great facts are of paramount importance in the history of the church of France during the first half of the seventeenth century. On the one hand a sort of intellectual and moral regeneration, a true religious renascence, was taking place in her midst, a movement which might be compared to the literary renascence which had taken place in lay society in the preceding century. On the other hand, the question so long debated between the temporal and the spiritual power was at last decided in favour of the former. Richelieu fought desperately against ultramontanism and loudly proclaimed the absolute independence of the civil power, and the necessity of having a national clergy whose interests should be bound up with those of the state.

The religious wars had left the French clergy in a deplorable condition. The church of France was in such a lax state that she seemed in danger of losing the fruits of the victory she had gained, by the incapacity or the vices of her members. However, we may say at once that this state of religious decadence was not irremediable. It was necessary to take prompt measures for reform, but the machinery for the work was there, and in greater completeness than appeared at first sight. It was only awaiting the workmen who were to set it in motion. If the wars of the league were responsible for great crimes and terrible outrages, they had also produced great virtues and fine characters. Men's minds, somewhat enervated at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the introduction of a new morality, had regained their vigour in the struggle. Having erred temporarily they were nevertheless not weakened, and when the combat was over they felt an intense craving for action and for a living faith; two forces which, well directed, can accomplish wonders.

This condition of mind also explains the very practical tendency shown by the religious movement which then took place. Indeed one of the most remarkable features of this regeneration of French Catholicism was, as Henri Martin[P] observes, the predominance of the practical over the ascetic and contemplative element.

Richelieu did not intend to exclude either the nobility or the clergy from the administration of state affairs; on the contrary he treated the clergy just as he did the aristocracy. He sought to introduce members of the order

into the king's councils, but only on condition that they were sufficiently enlightened to be worthy of such a position. He acted in the same way with regard to the clergy. We see him giving most important positions, both military and naval, to ecclesiastics. What he insisted upon was that these two orders of the nobility and clergy should not subordinate the interests of the state to their own, as they had been too prone to do in former times. He wished the clergy to be part of the state and to belong to the state, and to contribute a fair proportion towards public expenses. In a word, he wished for a national clergy. Therefore in his struggles to maintain, in the civil power as well as in the religious order, the ascendency of the patriotic principles of the true Gallican spirit, Richelieu found himself supported by his bitterest opponent, the parliament, and deserted by the majority of the clergy, who saw in this extension of the civil power the possible abolition of their own privileges. In 1625, the clergy, in order to defend themselves from the constant demands for money made on them by the government, had decided that in future no deputy could vote subsidies under any pretext without having expressly received full powers in the matter, and that the opposition of a single province should be sufficient to annul the resolutions of the assembly. Richelieu replied that he could not admit the principle in virtue of which the clergy were claiming absolute immunity from taxation; that the needs of the state were real, while those of the church were chimerical and arbitrary; that if the king's armies had not repulsed the enemy the clergy would have suffered much more.

The struggle about taxation between the civil power and the clergy attained still more formidable proportions in 1638. Richelieu seems to have made use of the brothers Dupuy to prepare the ground on which he intended openly to attack the immunities of the clergy in the matter of taxation. Pierre Dupuy in conjunction with his brother Jacques published anonymously, about the middle of 1638, his great work on the *Liberties of the Gallican Church*. He collected in the first volume some very daring tracts on the subject; then, following his usual method, he supported them by a second volume of official acts and significant precedents, systematically arranged under the title *Proofs of the Liberties*. In the tracts, published mostly during the troubles of the league, when the national orthodoxy of France was called in question, it was stated amongst other things that the pope had exercised no jurisdiction at all over the Gallican church during the first six centuries; that in the time of Clovis the sovereign head of the church after Jesus Christ was the king, not the pope; that the pope had no right to issue excommunications outside his own diocese; that there is no instance of either the popes or their legates presiding at any council held in Gaul before 742; that the said popes had not then any title which placed them above the other archbishops, and indeed did not possess any which was not common to them all. As for the proofs, "great care had been taken not to draw deductions from the acts; our kings, the assembled bishops of France, the parliament, and other sovereign bodies, the universities and some of the communities of the kingdom, were the authors of this work." This was an adroit way of assuming the consent of the whole nation during many centuries.

The clergy understood the significance of the attack, and protested strongly against doctrines which they thought would declare them independent of Rome only to make them the slaves of temporal power. On the 9th of February, 1639, eighteen bishops met at the house of Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and drew up a letter denouncing "this work of the devil" to their colleagues in a most violent manner. The cardinal undertook to

deliver this letter to Richelieu. How the minister replied is not known; but from that time edicts more violent than ever were issued against the clergy.

Amongst the bishops was one, the bishop of Chartres, who was entirely devoted to the cardinal, and who supported him strongly in his struggle with the church. He succeeded, it is said, in recovering a copy of all the edicts issued against the church in the most disturbed times and sent them to the superintendent Bullion. The latter made a report on them to the cardinal, and on the 16th of April, 1639, appeared an edict in which it was set forth that "ecclesiastics, communities, and other persons falling under the statute of mortmain are incapable of holding real property in France, that the king can compel them to pay dues on it within a year and a day of acquiring it, and in default of this the king may add the said property to his own domains; that the king is willing nevertheless to be satisfied with the payment of the indemnity for royal and feudal rights, which is due to him by his claims under mortmain; his majesty commands that these rights shall be sought out wherever they exist, in all sorts of livings, foundations, hospitals, confraternities, etc., excepting only the new communities, established thirty years ago, of the Jesuits and the Carmelites." The edict commanded that the research should extend as far back as 1520. This was, according to financiers, a matter of nearly eighty millions for the state. A short time after, an order appeared commanding the alienation of 200,000 livres a year on the Hôtel-de-Ville, guaranteed for five years only by the clergy, and imposing on the latter a perpetual responsibility for these 200,000 livres, and this without their own consent. The irritation of the clergy had reached a climax. They protested forcibly against this measure. Richelieu thought it would not be wise to push things to extremities. A declaration issued on the 7th of January, 1640, announced that the king would be satisfied with a levy of 3,600,000 livres as a compensation for his royal rights.

It was then that Dupuy, seeing that the king's authority was waning, published a violent discourse in defence of the king. Upon this an obscure priest named Hersent undertook in a Latin pamphlet, entitled *Optatus gallus*, to defend the rights of the church and denounce the machinations of those who were trying, he said, to foster schism in France. The parliament by a decision dated March 23rd, 1640, ordered the *Optatus gallus* to be torn up and burned "as casting doubt on the authority bestowed on sovereign princes by God." On the 28th of the same month, the archbishop of Paris, F. de Gondi, with Léonor d'Étampes bishop of Chartres, Nicolas bishop of Orleans, and Séguier bishop of Meaux, signed a declaration couched in almost the same terms, and having for its special object to repel most decidedly the accusation of schism made against the cardinal and a portion of the French clergy by the author of the *Optatus gallus*.

As for the government, it recommenced its attacks on the clergy and, no longer satisfied with the 3,600,000 livres at first demanded, it called upon all holders of livings to pay over the sixth part of their income for two years (6th of October, 1640). The edict was published under the seal, and a chamber was established at the Louvre composed of councillors of state, both ecclesiastic and lay, and magistrates, whose function it was to carry out the provisions of the edict and settle the law. Berland, the prior of St. Denis-de-la-Chartre, who, having entered the clerical agency and not being recognised as an agent, had not the keys of the archives at his disposal, had the audacity to break in the doors and carry off the old assessment rolls, amongst

them that of 1583, and to hand them over to the superintendent. When the new assessment was drawn up the agents of the clergy were desired to sign it. The abbé Saint-Vincent immediately formed an opposition party. This was suppressed by a decision of the 10th of November, which also forbade the agents "to hold any meeting either general or particular without the king's permission." The abbé Saint-Vincent then wrote to the dioceses telling them that all was lost. They decided to write to the cardinal and even the king, to appeal to his holiness, and to order public prayers to be offered up. In short, the clergy were in a state of indescribable tumult. The most violent accusations were hurled against this tyrant, this apostate, who was violating the privileges of the church, and trying to reduce her to a state of slavery which was quite unprecedented. Richelieu, however, who was at this time involved in a gigantic struggle against Austria and Spain, was anxious to be freed from all these entanglements at home. He appeared to give way and agreed to accept from an ecclesiastical assembly what he found it difficult to obtain by force. A general assembly was summoned at Mantes at the beginning of 1641. The government demanded 6,600,000 livres in all. The debate was long and stormy. The sieur d'Émeri was deputed by the king to signify to the archbishops of Sens and Toulouse and the bishops of Évreux, Maillezais, Bazas, and Toulon that they must leave the town, and each one retire to his own diocese without passing through Paris.

On the other hand the minority, who were devoted to Richelieu, made some very bold speeches. The affair finally ended according to Richelieu's desires. The government reduced its claims to five and a half millions, which were voted by the majority on the 27th of May.[r]

THE CONSPIRACY OF CINQ-MARS (1641-1642 A.D.)

One more effort was made to shake off the trammels of the hated cardinal. A conspiracy was entered into to deliver the land by the old Roman method of putting the tyrant to death ; and the curious part of the design is that it was formed almost in the presence of the king.[j]

Louis XIII had at that time a favourite, Henry d'Effiat, son of the old marshal and marquis de Cinq-Mars. He was a young man of twenty-two years of age, with a handsome face, finished manners, magnificent and extravagant. The king, always gloomy, found the need of an agreeable person, capable of diverting his thoughts, and even of amusing him. Having formed an affection for Cinq-Mars, he gave him in succession the posts of keeper of the wardrobe and grand equerry. Richelieu, whose close observation extended even over the intimate friends of Louis XIII, did not take umbrage at the favour bestowed upon a young man of so frivolous a nature, son of a father who had been one of his most devoted servants, and step-brother of the marshal De Meilleraie ; on the contrary he felt that the equerry usurped the place in the king's confidence of one of his declared enemies, Mademoiselle de Hautefort.

But Cinq-Mars was a young madman and, as Monglat said, too presumptuous. Intoxicated by his success, thinking he could do in all things as he pleased, he began to show an inordinate ambition. He dreamed of the fortune of Luynes ; he wished to be a duke and a peer, and to command the armies. Richelieu treated him like a child. Louis XIII had enough strength of mind to resist these follies, but not sufficient to send him away from him. He quarrelled with him, became reconciled again, and treated him as if he were a spoiled child. They called the equerry "the king's plaything."

[1641-1642 A.D.]

Cinq-Mars — offended at the way in which the cardinal snubbed him, encouraged, moreover, by the society of the Marais in which he was considered a success, and which was not afraid to show political opposition, in words at least — thought that he could, thanks to the liberty which Louis XIII granted him, compass the downfall of Richelieu. Louis XIII, like everyone else, felt the burden of his powerful minister's rule. He allowed his favourite to talk ; he even listened to him willingly, without taking him seriously. At heart he looked upon Richelieu as a necessary man and one whom he could not do without, as much from habit as from a conviction of the superiority of his genius. He told Cinq-Mars that he need never think of replacing him. Cinq-Mars then, with his daring and swift imagination, conceived the most incoherent ideas, such as killing the cardinal, waiting for his death, which the failing condition of his health made him think might be very soon, or bribing Gaston who would become regent if the king were to die. Each day he changed his plans, deciding upon no particular one. He had made vows, and probably more than vows, for the success of the count de Soissons. After the battle of La Marfée, he was advised to leave court, because of the suspicions that had arisen against him ; he refused, hoping to refute them by his presence, and to think of some new plan by which he could compass the end he desired.



HENRI COIFFIER DE RUZÉ, MARQUIS DE CINQ-MARS
(1620-1642)

Notwithstanding the risk, he formed a conspiracy. He tried to come to an understanding with the duke of Orleans, who might become regent, and also with the duke de Bouillon, whose fortress of Sedan was admirably situated to furnish him a refuge should he be obliged to fly from France. It was beginning over again the plot of the count de Soissons. Gaston answered vaguely, according to his custom, leaving others to act, and doing nothing himself. Bouillon showed himself more decided. Although he had accepted from the cardinal the command of the Italian army, he believed himself able, should the conspiracy prove unsuccessful, to withdraw to Sedan, and there await the death of the king. Francis Augustus de Thou, son of the historian, an inconsistent, restless, and nervous person, served as a go-between for the equerry, with the duke de Bouillon, and even with the queen. Bouillon simply observed that an army was necessary to protect Sedan. Cinq-Mars and Gaston then sent into Spain an agent, Fontrailles, with some blank signatures, to demand troops and a subsidy, and to propose a treaty. Olivares seized this opportunity to cause Richelieu trouble. Seriously or not, he accepted the proposals which Fontrailles made to him ; he signed the treaty,

scarcely discussing the terms of it, and contented himself with exacting from the princes a promise to restore to peace all that France had wrested from Spain. Fontrailles returned to Narbonne, where he found the conspiracy half divulged, and the head equerry decided to undertake nothing until he knew how the cardinal's illness would end. The duke of Orleans, carried away by the passion and zeal of some of his followers, but always irresolute and full of contradictions, had not left Blois; Bouillon was in Italy at the head of the army, they could not even communicate with one another. Fontrailles took a great deal of trouble to establish a secret correspondence between them. It was not only the illness of the cardinal that induced them to wait, but also the striking failure of the king's health. Cinq-Mars only looked upon the treaty as a last resource which they could keep back for a time. Gaston demanded that it should be given to him; then when Cinq-Mars, after much resistance, decided to send it to him, he kept it without signing it, or addressing the ratification to the governors of the Spanish Netherlands, as they had agreed to. Fontrailles fled to England.

RECOVERY AND TRIUMPH OF RICHELIEU

For a whole month Richelieu hung between life and death. At last he recovered, not indeed his health, but that energy which even suffering could not keep under. Prostrated by infirmity and pain, he appeared to have scarcely a spark of life, but, notwithstanding, never has one seen a finer example of Bossuet's *mot:* "A courageous soul is master of the body it animates." Retiring to Tarascon, a healthful and lonely town, under the care of the count d'Alais, governor of Provence, the cardinal, in spite of illness and absence, did not cease to rule the king, the government, and the army. A rumour was circulated that his retirement was due to fear; his enemies made a last attempt to destroy his influence over Louis XIII, but he triumphed over them on this as on all former occasions. The king, wearied by the length of the siege of Perpignan, and ill himself, left the camp to establish himself at Narbonne. There he fell a prey to the most contrary anxieties. He saw himself beset and spied upon on one side by Cinq-Mars, on the other by Chavigny and the Noyers. But, apart from the fact that he was in no wise willing to sacrifice Richelieu, he could perceive that the principal leaders and officers of the army were partisans of the cardinal, that the vain boastings of the equerry were displeasing to the military men, and that the latter indulged the maddest schemes for making himself well thought of. He was already very weary of his favourite, when on the 10th of June, 1642, he received a copy of the Spanish treaty that Richelieu sent to him at Narbonne by the intervention of Chavigny. How did this copy get into the cardinal's hands? No one could tell; according to the most likely conjectures, he obtained it through one of his secret agents or by the treachery of the abbé De la Rivière, who sought his favour, or through a servant of the duke of Orleans. Louis XIII was most indignant, and no longer hesitated. On the 12th he ordered Cinq-Mars, De Thou, and two others, to be arrested. Cinq-Mars remained concealed all one day in a house in the town, but he was discovered, and imprisoned in the citadel of Montpellier. Bouillon was arrested in Italy by his brigadiers at the head of the very army that he commanded. Gaston only was not pursued. The abbé De la Rivière came in his name to acknowledge his fault and to beg for the royal pardon.

The king went to Tarascon to the cardinal to assure him that his sentiments had not changed, and that he wished to await with him the end of this

[1642 A.D.]

great trial. We are told how Richelieu was in bed; how Louis, himself ill, was obliged to have a bed made up for himself by the side of Richelieu, and how they discussed thus the measures they ought to take. They decided that Gaston should be questioned and then pardoned, but on the condition of his making a full confession, the only means of convicting the accused parties. Louis XIII was unable to return to the army; he went to Fontainebleau by easy stages, arriving there the 23rd of July. Whilst on the road he heard of the death of his mother; Marie de' Medici had left England, where her presence was looked upon as a public encumbrance. Not finding the inhabitants either of Spain or of Holland willing to receive her, she went to Cologne where, at the house of the archbishop elector, she terminated the anxieties of her wandering life. The chancellor and the members of parliament claimed that a prince could not be cross-examined like anyone else, and that it was necessary he should give his declaration in writing. This mode of procedure had been adopted towards the duke of Orleans. The judges received his declaration at Villefranche on their way to Lyons, where the commission would sit. This commission was composed of state counsellors, of masters of requests, and of several members of the Grenoble parliament. Cinq-Mars had been transferred from the citadel of Montpellier to that of Pierre-Scize. De Thou had been taken to Lyons in a boat towed up the Rhone by that of the cardinal. Bouillon was brought there from his side. Richelieu had started by going up the Rhone slowly, for he could not bear the least fatigue. As this navigation was very laborious, he left the river at Valence and was placed in a great litter, or room, made expressly and carried upon the shoulders of his musketeers, who succeeded each other in relays. He was partially paralysed, incapable of moving or even of signing anything; nevertheless he never ceased working, having beside his bed in this portable room a chair and a table for a secretary. In this fashion he arrived at Lyons. He remained there only a few days, leaving before the end of the trial, and continuing his strange journey, partly by land, partly by the Loire and the recently finished canal of Briare.

Gaston's declarations left no doubt as to the reality of the plot. Cinq-Mars did not deny it; he owned to everything, and appeared before his judges with a bearing as noble as it was courageous. As for De Thou, he had played an absurd part, and one full of contradictions; "he was concerned in everything," said Fontrailles,[k] "and denied knowledge of anything." Priding himself upon a scrupulous loyalty and delicacy of conscience, he was made the confidant of all the conspirators and all the conspiracies invented against the cardinal and against the king. He had got it into his head that his name, his character, his title of former minister of state would assure him a high place in the government that should succeed to that of Richelieu. He was then mixed up with the enemies of the cardinal; he had even, which was far more serious, warned the queen of what was being prepared. Of his complicity there was no doubt. His guilt was not so certain.

The judges passed a sentence of death. Cinq-Mars was condemned unanimously; De Thou unanimously but for one voice. The execution took place at once upon a scaffold erected in the middle of the place des Terreaux (September 13th). The grand equerry and his friend died with as much dignity as resignation. De Thou, whose eager mind was filled with the deepest sentiments of religion, showed a martyr's enthusiasm. Neither of them protested against the blow which struck them, but their youth, the sensation they had caused, the candour of their answers at the trial, their noble bearing upon the scaffold deeply affected the town of Lyons. "M. de

Thou," wrote Marca, one of the judges, "died like a Christian and a brave man. M. le Grand also showed an equal firmness and met his death with an admirable confidence, composure, and Christian devotion." The sight of this execution awoke a very natural pity, seeing that the public knew little of the details of the plot. It was regarded as the last act of vengeance of a minister who felt his power ebbing with his life.[l]

THE LAST DAYS OF RICHELIEU

The tempestuous year of 1642 was drawing to a glorious close. Fortune, after long wavering, threw itself on the side of France. Austria was humiliated and France was in the ascendency. Henry IV had won independence for her, Richelieu gave her supremacy; the work of Charles V and Philip II was undone forever. France resumed the position at the head of the nations which she had held when she led Europe in the Crusades of the Middle Ages. This grand symphony of victories resounded about a funeral pyre. All these conquered standards were lowered before a dying man. The epic poem that astonished the world for eighteen years was not to lack a majestic end; the hero was to be buried in the triumph which providence did not permit him to complete.

The victory over Cinq-Mars, and above all the general success of the French policy, had for a few months brought back the life that was ebbing away; but the slow dissolution of the worn-out organism had continued. On the evening of the 28th of November Richelieu, after returning from Ruel to the palais Cardinal, was taken with a violent fever, with pain in the side, and spitting of blood; four bleedings were insufficient to allay the fever. On the 2nd of December public prayers were offered for the sick man in all the churches of Paris, and the king came from St. Germain to see him. Richelieu talked to Louis like a man resigned to death, asked him to protect his family in memory of his services, recommended to him the ministers Noyers and Chavigny, and especially Mazarin whom he represented, it is said, as the person most capable of filling his own place; and finally submitted to the king a declaration which he had just had drafted against the duke of Orleans, to exclude that prince from all right to the regency and the administration of the kingdom in case of the death of the king. This was the last service that Richelieu rendered to France.

After the visit of the king the cardinal, feeling worse, asked the physicians how long he might still live. They, wishing to flatter the master to the very mouth of the tomb, replied that there was no need to despair — that God, seeing how necessary he was to the welfare of France, would intervene to save him. The cardinal shook his head and calling back one of the royal surgeons said, "Speak to me with open heart, not as a physician but as a friend." "Monseigneur," said the physician, "in twenty-four hours you will be dead or well." "That's the way to talk!" said Richelieu, "I like that." He sent for the curate of St. Eustace, his parish. "Here is my Judge," he said when the consecrated host was presented to him, "my Judge who is soon to pronounce my sentence. I pray him to condemn me if in my ministry I have followed any other end than the welfare of religion and of the state." "Do you forgive your enemies?" asked the curé. "I have never had any but the enemies of the state."

Most of those present contemplated the dying man with admiration, some with fear. "Here," said Cospéan, the bishop of Lisieux, "is an assurance that dismays me!" Doubtless Richelieu,[m] in order to fortify his con-

science, repeated the maxims of those two Latin testaments which contain his supreme thought; his official will in which he disposes of his dignities and his wealth concerns only his family; the other two are addressed to posterity. "I have been severe to some," he said, "in order to be good to all. I have loved justice and not vengeance." Was he very sure of it? "I have tried to give to Gaul the boundaries that nature intended for it, to identify Gaul with France, and to establish the new Gaul wherever the old one was."

On the afternoon of the 3rd of December the king came to see the cardinal for the last time. The physicians, having no more hope, had given up the sick man to empirics, who gave him a little relief. But his feebleness was increasing; on the morning of the 4th, feeling the approach of death, he made his niece, the duchess d'Aiguillon retire, as she was "the person whom he had most loved," according to his own words. This was the only moment, not of weakness, but of tenderness, that he had; his indomitable firmness had not given way during his long suffering. All present, ministers, generals, relatives, and servants, burst into tears; for this terrible man was, according to the testimony of his least favourable contemporaries, "the best master, relative, and friend that ever was known." Towards noon he heaved a deep sigh, then a feebler one, then his body collapsed and was still; his great soul was gone. He had lived fifty-seven years and three months, the same number of years as Henry IV.

Human judgments [continues Martin] have been and still are contradictory concerning this minister of salutary harshness, this strong-armed labourer who is accused of having pulled up from French soil the good grain along with the tares. The most opposite opinions are in league for and against his memory. Before 1789 lords and commons, after 1789 ultramontanes and a large part of the liberals heap abuse upon him. Retz[n] claims that Cardinal Richelieu traded on all the evil intentions and all the ignorance of the last two centuries, in order to form in the most legitimate of monarchies the most scandalous and most dangerous tyranny." Montesquieu[o] believes that "the most harmful citizens of France" were Richelieu and Louvois.

On the other hand the partisans of unity and of strong and vigorous power, whether monarchists or democrats, rise in favour of the great man, as do all those who put the love of country above all other social or political sentiments. The *Moniteur* of 1789, as the mouthpiece of this party, exclaims with the voice of the Revolution itself: "Let the aristocrats rage against the memory of this intrepid minister who overthrew their pride and avenged the people for the oppression of the great. By sacrificing great victims to the tranquillity of the state he became its pacifier. He was the first to apply true remedies to the root of the evil by degrading the intermediate powers that had enslaved the nation for nearly nine centuries. Nothing that can make a vast kingdom powerful and glorious escaped his indefatigable activity."

The popular instinct however has not decided the question as it has for Henry IV. The abstract and half veiled greatness of this invalid who from his bed overturned empires has not taken hold of the heart and the imagination of the unlettered masses and imprinted its pale mysterious figure in ineffaceable lines. The man who did most for the greatness of France is little known by the French people: is this the punishment for his severity towards the suffering masses and for his harsh maxims? "If the people were too much at ease, it would not be possible to hold them within the rules of their duty."[p]

When the king heard of the death of his minister he coldly remarked: "A great statesman is dead." He survived him but six months. A few days before his death he named Anne of Austria regent and Gaston, his brother, lieutenant-general of the kingdom. Louis XIII felt great remorse for the assassination of Marshal d'Ancre and for his treatment of his mother, the queen. He died at the château St. Germain, at the age of forty-two years. One of his contemporaries says of him that he was so indifferent in his government that all the world awaited his death with impatience, even those who owed most to him.[c]

STEPHEN'S ESTIMATE OF LOUIS XIII AND OF RICHELIEU

Louis XIII [says Stephen] was a man of large and just capacity. His ideas of the duties of his station were princely and magnanimous. He lived in profound submission to the law of his conscience, in the fear of God, and in veneration for all men in whom he saw, or thought he saw, any image, however faint, of the divine beneficence and power. But he was of a feeble, indolent, and melancholy spirit. He was habitually wrapt in reveries, sometimes splendid, though more often gloomy; but he was always incapable of prompt or decisive action. Though a king, he never was and never could have been a free man. It was among the necessities of his existence to live under the government of a master. After selecting and rejecting many such, he at length submitted himself to the dominion of Richelieu, and thenceforward endured that bondage to the last. He endured it certainly, neither from attachment nor from fear, but because, as often as he struggled to regain his liberty, his efforts were baffled by his admiration of the genius of his great minister, and by his persuasion that no other man could so effectually promote the welfare of his state and people.

Richelieu, on the other hand, was one of the rulers of mankind, in virtue of an inherent and indefeasible birthright. His title to command rested on that sublime force of will, and decision of character, by which, in an age of great men, he was raised above them all. It is a gift which supposes and requires in him on whom it is conferred, convictions too firm to be shaken by the discovery of any unperceived or unheeded truths. It is, therefore, a gift, which, when bestowed on the governors of nations, also presupposes in them the patience to investigate, the capacity to comprehend, and the genius to combine, all those views of the national interest, under the guidance of which their inflexible policy is to be conducted to its destined consummation. For the stoutest hearted of men, if acting in ignorance, or under the impulse of haste or of error, must often pause, often hesitate, and not seldom recede. Richelieu was exposed to no such danger. He moved onwards to his predetermined ends with that unfaltering step which attests, not merely a stern immutability of purpose, but a comprehensive survey of the path to be trodden, and a profound acquaintance with all its difficulties and all its resources. It was a path from which he could be turned aside neither by his bad nor by his good genius; neither by fear, lassitude, interest, or pleasure; nor by justice, pity, humanity, or conscience.

The idolatrous homage of mere mental power, without reference to the motives by which it is governed, or to the ends to which it is addressed,—that blind hero-worship, which would place Wallenstein and Gustavus Adolphus on the same level, and extol with equal warmth the triumphs of Cromwell and of Washington, though it be a modern fashion, has certainly

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not the charm of novelty. On the contrary it might, in the language of the Puritans, be described as one of the "old follies of the old Adam"; and, to the influence of that folly, the reputation of Richelieu is not a little indebted.

In his estimate, the absolute dominion of the French crown and the grandeur of France were convertible terms. They seemed to him but as two different aspects of the great consummation to which every hour of his political life was devoted. In approaching that ultimate goal, there were to be surmounted many obstacles which he distinctly perceived, and of which he has given a very clear summary in his *Testament Politique*. "When it pleased your majesty," he says, "to give me not only a place in your council, but a great share in the conduct of your affairs, the Huguenots divided the state with you. The great lords were acting not as your subjects, but as independent chieftains. The governors of your provinces were conducting themselves like so many sovereign princes. Foreign affairs and alliances were disregarded. The interest of the public was postponed to that of private men. In a word, your authority was, at that time, so torn to shreds, and so unlike what it ought to be, that, in the confusion, it was impossible to recognise the genuine traces of your royal power."

Before his death, Richelieu had triumphed over all these enemies, and had elevated the house of Bourbon upon their ruins. He is, perhaps, the only human being who ever conceived and executed, in the spirit of philosophy, the design of erecting a political despotism; not, indeed, a despotism like that of Constantinople or Teheran, but a power which, being restrained by religion, by learning, and by public spirit, was to be exempted from all other restraints; a dynasty, which like a kind of subordinate province, was to spread wide its arms for the guidance and shelter of the subject multitude; itself the while inhabiting a region too lofty to be ever darkened by the mists of human weakness, or of human corruption.

To devise schemes worthy of the academies of Laputa, and to pursue them with all the relentless perseverance of Cortes or of Clive, has been characteristic of many of the statesmen of France, both in remote and in recent times. Richelieu was but a more successful Mirabeau. He was not so much a minister as a dictator. He was rather the depositary, than the agent, of the royal power. A king in all things but the name, he reigned with that exemption from hereditary and domestic influences, which has so often imparted to the papal monarchs a kind of preterhuman energy, and has as often taught the world to deprecate the celibacy of the throne.

Richelieu was the heir of the designs of Henry IV, and the ancestor of those of Louis XIV. But they courted, and were sustained by, the applause and the attachment of their subjects. He passed his life in one uninterrmitted struggle with each, in turn, of the powerful bodies over whom he ruled. By a long series of well-directed blows, he crushed forever the political and military strength of the Huguenots. By his strong hand, the sovereign courts were confined to their judicial duties, and their claims to participate in the government of the state were scattered to the winds. Trampling under foot all rules of judicial procedure and the clearest principles of justice, he brought to the scaffold one after another of the proudest nobles of France, by sentences dictated by himself, to extraordinary judges of his own selection; thus teaching the doctrine of social equality, by lessons too impressive to be misinterpreted or forgotten by any later generation. Both the privileges, in exchange for which the greater fiefs had surrendered their independence, and the franchises, for the conquest of

which the cities, in earlier times, had successfully contended, were alike swept away by this remorseless innovator. He exiled the mother, oppressed the wife, degraded the brother, banished the confessor, and put to death the kinsman and favourites of the king, and compelled the king himself to be the instrument of these domestic severities. Though surrounded by enemies and by rivals, his power ended only with his life. Though beset by assassins, he died in the ordinary course of nature. Though he had waded to dominion through slaughter, cruelty, and wrong, he passed to his great account amidst the applause of the people, with the benedictions of the Church; and, as far as any human eye could perceive, in hope, in tranquillity, and in peace.[v]



COSTUMES OF THE PERIOD OF LOUIS XIII



CHAPTER XVIII

THE SUPREMACY OF MAZARIN

[1643–1661 A.D.]

> Any other nation, after its Mazarins, its Fouquets, its Louvois, so many wars, so many glories, so many heroes, so many rascals, would have stayed crushed and never arisen. Nevertheless, France still lives.
>
> —MICHELET.[b]

LOUIS XIII had hastened to carry out all the provisions of Richelieu's will. His own did not meet with the same fate, for its most important dispositions were immediately modified. While regretfully appointing Anne of Austria regent he had put strong restrictions upon her authority and provided that the partisans of Richelieu, Mazarin and the prince of Condé, were to control the government. He knew the queen had not been unaware of the conspiracies of the court, not even of that of Cinq-Mars, and that she had always listened to Richelieu's enemies. Towards the end he had drawn nearer to her and his brother, but without granting them his confidence.

Scarcely had Louis closed his eyes when Mazarin resolved to give over the entire government to the queen. Unity and power seemed, to the cardinal, the most necessary thing: he came to an understanding with the bishop of Beauvais, almoner of the queen; he was able to persuade Gaston, Condé, and the other councillors, who withdrew opposition in consideration of the compensation offered them. Consequently, on the 18th of May, parliament met in extraordinary session; the peers were present. The queen attended with the young Louis XIV and held a bed of justice. On the express renunciation of the duke of Orleans and the prince of Condé the assembly unanimously set aside all the restrictions to the queen's power, and decided that the title of lieutenant-general held by the duke of Orleans would be simply honorary.[c]

The queen-mother was now in her forty-second year. She inspired almost universal sympathy, by her good looks, agreeable manner, and previous misfortunes which now counted for virtues. Age had made her more sedate and more devout; her devotion, however, was still mingled with gallantry, but it was the serious romantic gallantry of Spain which is not incompatible with external dignity and reserve. Facile and genial in ordinary intercourse, but altogether impulsive and insincere when her passions were aroused; going when necessary as far as perjury—though doubtless with the resource of mental reservation—to extricate herself from a wrong step; intrepid by temperament, in spite of more than one act of moral cowardice; of an unconquerable stubbornness in her prejudices and in certain of her attachments, although sensitive to ingratitude; at the same time absolute by her temperament and her principles, and unable through inactivity to exercise the absolute power, her queenly nature was invaluable to a minister capable of making a favourable impression on her head and her heart.

Mazarin made an attack on both of these at the same time, and soon occupied an unshakable position with her. Their correspondence leaves doubt neither as to the passion which this minister expressed and which he inspired in the queen, nor as to the constancy which Anne had at least the merit of preserving in this last passion, which the progress of age did not extinguish.[1]

Mazarin was of the same age as the queen. We may recall his brilliant début as a diplomat thirteen years before, when before Casale he prevented two armies from falling upon each other. Since then he had remained faithfully attached to the interests of France, which had raised him to the cardinalate without his having received holy orders—he never was a priest.[2] He gave himself out to be a Roman nobleman. His enemies denied this, and asserted that his father, a Sicilian merchant, had taken refuge in the states of the holy father, after having gone bankrupt at Palermo. A. Renée[c] has investigated every version of the cardinal's origin and concludes that his father, the son of a Sicilian artisan, came a fortune-seeker to Rome, where he became chamberlain to the constable Colonna. At all events the mind, the face, the complaisance, and the dexterity of the young Giulio Mazarini won him, at an early age, the patronage of some of the noble houses of Rome, and after having tried the sword, the young adventurer felt his vocation and assumed the soutane as a stepping-stone to diplomacy; at the age of twenty-eight he met Richelieu—we know the rest.

The character and the future of the fortunate Italian were still at this moment a problem for the court and for the public.[d] As yet he frightened no one. He was far from being believed as powerful and especially as much a master of the queen's mind as he already was. He often spoke of returning

[1 Michelet[b] believes that the love affair of Mazarin and the queen began even earlier than their contemporaries think. He says: "It has been said that Louis XIV was the son of Mazarin—this is certainly wrong. He was of France, ballasted by Austria. But his brother, the second duke of Orleans (born September 22nd, 1640), like the first, Gaston, was thoroughly Italian in spirit and in manner. He was as much Mazarin as Gaston was Concini. I fully appreciate the difficulties. Their contemporaries believe that she did not give herself to him until later. There was at least one entr'acte in her favour." To a court tradition, related, among others, by the Princess Palatine,[n] mother of the regent, is due a belief that Mazarin's continued hold over the queen-mother is explained by the fact that they had been secretly married. Kitchin[o] says "there is no reason to doubt that they were actually married." But Martin assures us that "there is not the slightest indication of this, either in their correspondence or in what we know of the *Carnets*[p] of Mazarin."]

[2 He was, however, a deacon and so in lesser orders.]

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to Italy. What then was the astonishment when, on the very evening of the bed of justice, it developed that Anne of Austria had designated him to preside over the council.[c]

It would take a simple mind indeed to believe that an event as foreseen as the death of the king should have taken the queen unawares, that she should not have known which way to turn, and that she should have seriously offered the power to this one or to that. The whole affair was certainly settled beforehand; and for what reason? By reason of her indolence, which told her that a bed already made was better to lounge on, sleep in, than a new arrangement which would oblige her to will, to think. She knew that, ready to set out from London, from Brussels, from Madrid, there was a crowd of exiles, calling themselves martyrs to the queen's cause, who would demand the crown for their martyrdom. How to satisfy them? She was all ears to him who taught her the sweetness of ingratitude.

In this Mazarin was admirable. He often varied, but never on this point. His character offers the beauty of a well-sustained type which does not contradict itself. Ingrate towards Joseph and Chavigny, who made him in France, he got out of two scrapes during the Fronde by the same means — ingratitude towards Condé and then towards De Retz. Finally he crowned his life with what was worse than all — ingratitude towards the queen, his oldtime sweetheart.

The puppets of Richelieu, odious, detested, the Chavignys, the Bouthilliers, were impossible; Mazarin was a stranger, with no ties in France, and ready to depart as soon as he had put the queen *au courant*. He was packing up his things. A good excuse for remaining. The queen appeared very uncertain. She consulted much, hesitated much. Finally Condé came to tell Mazarin, "ready to depart," that the queen made him chief of the council, keeping also Chavigny and his father, the chancellor Séguier, the same who had conducted the inquiry against her in 1637.

A mortal blow for Beaufort and the Vendômes, the queen's friends. When they demanded an explanation she said that Mazarin would not let her forget her friends, that he was *au courant* of affairs, a stranger, consequently the less dangerous, that he was amusing, but above all disinterested. This disinterestedness was so extreme, and the poor man remained so poor, that after a few years, when he was driven out and wished to return, he was able to raise an army with his own money![b]

BATTLE OF ROCROI (MAY 18TH–19TH, 1643 A.D.)

But before anything could happen, Paris was suddenly struck with a piece of good news which produced the very greatest effect. While under the last reign no great battle had been accomplished by the French armies, that of Louis XIV opened with the victory of Rocroi.

Francisco de Mello had advanced to the frontier of the Low Countries with 28,000 men, counting on profiting by the uncertainty into which the last illness and death of Louis XIII would plunge the French government. France had, on her side, an army in the field to observe him, and it was Louis XIII's will that this army be placed in command of the duke d'Enghien, son of Condé, a young prince of twenty-two years, the choice of whom must attach his house all the more closely to the future regency. Enghien had served hitherto only as a volunteer; but he had been instructed, exercised, and formed in the best of schools. He had already shown in war a vigour and intelligence which everyone applauded. He inspired confidence

both in his officers and his soldiers. They foresaw in him a great captain. As an adviser and to moderate his ardour he had been given an able lieutenant-general, Duhallier, become Marshal de l'Hôpital, and several excellent *maréchaux de camp*, Gassion, La Ferté-Senneterre, and Sirot.

The Spaniards entered Champagne, and besieged Rocroi. The place, important by its situation at the head of the Ardennes, was in no condition to resist. Enghien, having collected between St. Quentin and Guise 14,000 infantry and 6,000 horse, marched to its relief. On the way he learned of Louis XIII's death, but the news did not stop him. He resolved to give battle to relieve the tedium of methodic warfare — this was also the advice of Gassion and Sirot. On the 18th of May he arrived before the Spaniards, who, protected by woods through which the French had to pass, were not expecting to see them appear; and the time they took to range themselves for battle permitted the French prince to approach. The day was far advanced and he contented himself with a small amount of cannonading. The next day Enghien ordered the attack at daybreak, for he wished to forestall the arrival of a corps which General Beck was bringing to Francisco de Mello. He himself, with Gassion, charged at the head of the right wing and routed the enemy. The left wing, commanded by Marshal de l'Hôpital and La Ferté-Senneterre, had less success. It disputed its ground but was badly used. Enghien and Gassion, victorious on the right, did not neglect their advantages. They immediately fell upon the Spanish division which was in action with De l'Hôpital, the moment at which, thinking itself victorious, it began to break ranks and was running to pillage the tents of the French. Sirot, in command of the reserves, received the order to advance, and he waited to execute it until the very moment when Enghien and Gassion should have renewed the contest. Then he gave it, and the victory was decided. The two divisions of the enemy broken and put to flight, there yet remained the Spanish reserve infantry which formed a square battalion difficult to penetrate. It was composed of picked veterans and commanded by the old count de Fuentes, who had to be carried in a litter at the head of his soldiers. The victorious Enghien threw himself upon the square, dealt it several sharp attacks, and finally broke it by attacking its rear and flanks while his cannon thundered upon it.[c]

The massacre was appalling. Moved to pity, the duke d'Enghien threw himself between the two armies, commanding his men to spare the vanquished. "All the Spanish infantry," says La Moussaie, "crowded round him and his commanding officers, seeking shelter from the fury of the French, and more particularly of the Swiss, who could not bring themselves to make prisoners of any. After giving orders to the prisoners' guard, the prince collected his troops and prepared to receive Beck, should he have the courage to meet him on the plain. But Gassion shortly returned from his pursuit of the enemy and informed the duke that he had nothing to fear from the German general. Beck had not even passed beyond the edge of the wood, being content with rallying the fugitives, and at the approach of Gassion's cavalry he had fled precipitately towards Luxemburg.

Seeing his triumph thus complete, the duke d'Enghien, with the Christian piety that never forsook him even in battle, fell on his knees, in company with his whole army, and gave thanks to God for the victory. Thus ended one of the most bloody and most glorious days in the history of France. The battle had lasted four hours. The Spanish army left 8,000 dead upon the field, and 6,000 prisoners in the hands of the French. Among the slain was the brave count de Fuentes. Don Francisco de Mello had been made a prisoner

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for a few moments, but he managed to escape and took refuge at Mariembourg, then at Philippeville, where he collected the fragments of the Spanish army. Two hundred flags and sixty standards fell into the hands of the French. The Spanish baggage wagons were plundered and were found to contain all the money destined for the pay of the troops. The French lost about two thousand men.[f]

Enghien possessed the power of prompt decision and knew the value of time. He turned his victory to good account by marching immediately upon Thionville, the possession of which was of extreme importance to the Three Bishoprics and at the siege of which Feuquières had come to grief in 1639. Mazarin approved his plan and furnished all that was necessary for the siege. Instead of proceeding with that methodical regularity learned from the Dutch, Enghien pressed his attacks; they were very deadly, especially for the officers, but his plan was to reach his end the more quickly, to astonish the enemy, and to avoid sickness, which was more fatal than artillery in prolonged sieges. Thionville surrendered the 8th of August. The little town of Sierck, which commanded Luxemburg, capitulated a few days later.

Enghien was placed at a bound above all the captains employed by Richelieu. The French army, formed by eight successive years of campaigns, equal at least to those of neighbouring nations, leaving nothing to be desired in instruction, experience of its officers, discipline, good administration, or material organisation, had finally found a leader worthy of it. Enghien, with his eagle glance, great promptitude of execution, and an ardour which he knew how to moderate, disconcerted the rational and prudent tactics of the enemy's generals. The battle of Rocroi bore witness to the military progress of France, and dealt a serious blow to the prestige of the Spanish armies, when Spain had, for three years, been seeing her power shaken and her resources weakened.[c]

THE IMPORTANTS (1643 A.D.)

The return of Mazarin to power was received with surprise and mortification by the returned exiles, the enemies of Richelieu, those who had deemed themselves possessed of the heart and confidence of the queen. They were for the most part young men, such as the duke de Beaufort, and a host of noble striplings, who were all, nevertheless, profound statesmen in their own esteem.

With pretensions to govern, they found it necessary to alter or conceal their juvenile and frivolous habits; they affected to be grave and sententious, and some even thought it necessary to give time to study and reflection; a whim, the characteristic and beneficial consequences of which are seen in the *Mémoires* of De Retz and the *Maximes* of the duke de la Rochefoucauld. The latter was at this time one of the young friends of the queen. Despite the talents that some of these youths afterwards displayed, their present pretensions and demeanour were considered as absurd, and the party was ironically called *les Importants*, that of the "important." On the side opposed to them were drawn up Cardinal Mazarin, the old partisans of Richelieu, and, amongst the noblesse, the prince of Condé and his gallant son, the duke d'Enghien.

The queen-regent, as became her position, affected neutrality, but supported her newly chosen minister. The *importants*, however, hoped to regain the ascendency through the means of Anne of Austria's old favourite, Madame de Chevreuse, who was now returning from her long exile. This lady had

once been all-powerful with the queen: her misfortunes, occasioned by that attachment, gave her, she thought, an increase of claim; she totally put out of consideration how far the policy of a regent might interfere with the affections of a queen, and her party pretensions were as high as her resentments. She was warmly and cordially welcomed back by Anne; Mazarin hastened to conciliate her, and commenced by placing 50,000 crowns before her, asking if he might count her amongst his friends. Madame de Chevreuse required the dismissal of Chavigny, and the cardinal instantly consented to sacrifice the secretary: then came the great demands of the party, *viz.*, that Sedan should be restored to the duke de Bouillon, the government of Brittany to the duke de Vendôme, and that of Guienne to young Épernon; Le Havre, too, was required for the future duke de la Rochefoucauld.

These demands were no less than to re-constitute the power and independence of the grandees, that Richelieu had spent his life and steeped his memory in blood in order to reduce. Anne of Austria and Mazarin, now in the place of authority held by Richelieu, could not but see with his eyes: the adroit Mazarin, however, did not give to Madame de Chevreuse the flat and peremptory denial that would have come from Richelieu's mouth; he looked complaisant and yielding, and drew on the negotiatrix of the *importants* to fresh pretensions. One of these was to supersede the chancellor Séguier by Châteauneuf. Now Châteauneuf had presided at the commission which condemned the duke de Montmorency, and to favour him would be to outrage the princess of Condé, sister of that duke. Mazarin pretended to stand out on this point, hesitatingly, no doubt; Madame de Chevreuse insisted; and the cardinal, determined to break with a party whose pretensions were exorbitant, and which sought to replace the aristocracy on its old footing of superiority to government and ministry, affected to break with them rather than insult the family of Condé; thus securing powerful support, and averting the suspicions of the young noblesse from the political jealousy which he bore them.



MADAME DE MONTBAZON

A rupture was declared; and a lady's quarrel soon afterwards occurred to precipitate hostilities, and give the minister a pretext for acting. The duchess de Longueville, of the family of Condé, and one of the beauties of the court, was maligned by Madame de Montbazon, sister-in-law of Madame de Chevreuse. The latter found a *billet-doux* in the handwriting of the former, and addressed, she asserted, to the count de Coligny. This piece of scandal or calumny convulsed the entire circle of influential personages. The duke d'Enghien challenged the duke de Beaufort; the duke of Guise

and the count de Coligny fought in the Place Royal, Madame de Longueville being spectatress of the discomfiture of her chevalier, who died of his wounds. The queen in vain endeavoured to bring about an accommodation. The *importants* were too deeply mortified, and nothing short of the disgrace of the cardinal would satisfy them. The queen peremptorily refusing this, the duke de Beaufort entered into a scheme for making away with the cardinal by violence. Circumstances occurred to baffle and interrupt the design. Épernon was sounded in the meantime by one of the conspirators, and he instantly betrayed it. The duke de Beaufort was consequently arrested on the following day. Mesdames de Montbazon and Chevreuse were both exiled, as well as the duke and duchess of Vendôme, the dukes of Guise and Mercœur, and other less illustrious nobles. Here is the exculpation of Richelieu, and the excuse of his severity. No sooner is Anne of Austria, his rival and enemy, in the place of power, than she is obliged to adopt his policy and his strong measures, notwithstanding that such acts did violence to her private feelings. She wept on ordering the arrest of Beaufort; but, like the late monarch, she was compelled to sacrifice her feelings to her own interest and that of the state. The reign of the *importants* lasted three months and a half.

The four years which succeeded 1643 were years of tranquillity to the regent, triumph to Mazarin, and glory to France. The petulance of the noblesse was checked by the discomfiture of the *importants*. Mazarin, instead of imitating Richelieu and reigning by terror alone, sought to captivate by giving scope to pleasure, and creating a general taste for light and social amusements. He encouraged fêtes and gallantry. He was prodigal of favours, of money, of everything save authority. He bound the noblesse, and their more froward dames and mistresses, in golden and in flowery chains; and those who a year before were clamouring for independent governments, then limited their ambition to a duke's title. The sage La Rochefoucauld himself has recorded in his *Mémoires*[m] how he pleaded for this important distinction, in order, as he observes, that his wife might enjoy the privilege of a *tabouret* or stool at court.[g]

THE EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG KING

Louis XIV, born September 5th, 1638, had now (1645) completed his seventh year; that being the age at which kings passed from the control of women to the control of men, it became necessary to provide him with a governor and a tutor. To Cardinal Mazarin the queen desired to hand over the supreme control of Louis' bringing up, and for that purpose created for him the post of superintendent of the king's education.

Several contemporary writers have reproached Mazarin with having directed the education of the young Louis carelessly. La Porte, a groom of the bed-chamber to the king, accused the cardinal of having no other dream than to obtain empire over the young prince's will by surrounding him with his own family and partisans. Madame de Motteville,[k] without being quite so prejudiced, claims that he thwarted the good intentions of the young prince's governor, the marquis de Villeroi. Nevertheless, an entry in the note-books proves that even as early as 1647 Mazarin exerted himself to remove from the prince such persons as he thought dangerous. In the case of François de Rochechouart, who enjoyed an old-established credit with the queen, Mazarin declared that a place must not be given him near the king; "for," he writes, "his incessant flatteries are extremely prejudicial to the

king, and prompt him to regard with great displeasure those who speak the truth to him." Yet one must recognise that during a long period the cardinal, absorbed in politics, paid little heed to the king's education. It was only during the later years of his life that, having reached the summit of power and glory, he helped by his counsels to inspire in the young Louis habits of order, of regular work, of strong and tenacious will, of supreme and authoritative government. Judging by results, this education was far from being sterile. The king's governor, intrusted to accompany him everywhere, to watch over his safety and direct his actions, was Nicolas de Neufville, first marquis, then duke and marshal, de Villeroi. This individual had gained a certain renown in war, but it was pre-eminently as a clever and pliant courtier that he shone. He was a willing tool in the hands of the minister. It seems that his rôle was limited to winning the young king's good graces, to teaching him the ways and manners of the court, in which he himself excelled, and to giving him for companion and favourite his own son, François de Neufville-Villeroi, who became in his turn Duke-Marshal de Villeroi.

The post of tutor was filled by Hardouin de Beaumont de Périfixe, doctor of the Sorbonne, who ultimately became archbishop of Paris, and to whom we owe a *History of Henry IV* written for the instruction of Louis XIV. The classical education of the young king was meagre. Madame de Motteville[k] tells us "he was made to translate Cæsar's *Commentaries;* he learned to dance, to draw, and to ride, and he was very skilful in all bodily exercises." The Venetian ambassador, Nani, asserts that the tutor did neglect to teach the young king the principles of virtue.[f]

MILITARY GLORY (1644–1648 A.D.)

The year 1644 is marked by the brilliant manœuvres of the duke of Enghien and Turenne.[g] After the capture of Sierck, Enghien drove the Germans back across the Rhine, and crossed after them; he hastened to repair the losses and defeats which the French had met with on the frontier after the death of Marshal de Guébriant, which had occurred at the siege of Rottweil in Swabia (1643). [Guébriant's army, now badly led by several leaders, had allowed itself to be surprised by the imperials at Tuttlingen.] Enghien found Freiburg im Breisgau taken and the Bavarian general Mercy beneath its walls with an army greater than his own. Enghien had two marshals of France under him, of whom one was Grammont and the other Turenne, who had just been created marshal after having served brilliantly in Piedmont against the Spaniards. The duke and his two generals attacked Mercy's camp intrenched on two heights. The battle recommenced three times on three different days (August 3rd–5th, 1644). It is said that the duke of Enghien threw his commander's baton into the enemy's entrenchments and, sword in hand, went after it at the head of the Conti regiment.[1] The battle of Freiburg, more bloody than decisive, was the duke's second victory. Mercy decamped four days afterwards. Philippsburg, Worms, and Mainz were the proof and the fruit of the victory.

Enghien returned to Paris, received the acclamation of the people and demanded recompense of the court; leaving his army to the prince-marshal Turenne. But this general, skilful as he was, was beaten at Marienthal (May, 1645). Enghien hastened back to his troops, resumed the command,

[1] This statement is not substantiated, and is not to be found in any contemporary writing. The first book that speaks of it bears the date 1694.]

and joined to the glory of again commanding Turenne that of repairing his defeat. He attacked Mercy on the plains of Nördlingen, and won a great battle early in August. Marshal de Grammont was captured, but so was General Glen who commanded under Mercy, and the latter himself was among the slain. Mercy, who has been reckoned among the great captains of his time, was buried close to the battle-field, and on his tomb was graven, "*Sta Viator; Heroem Calcas*" (Halt traveller, thou treadest on a hero).

The name of the duke d'Enghien[1] now eclipsed all others. In October, 1646, he besieged Dunkirk in sight of the Spanish army, and was the first to give that place to the French. Such success and such service brought forth less reward than suspicion in the court, and made him as much feared by the ministry as by the enemy. Condé [as we must now call him] was therefore withdrawn from the scenes of this conquest and glory and sent into Catalonia with inefficient and ill-paid troops. He besieged Lerida, but was obliged to raise the siege (1647). A wavering state of affairs soon forced the court to recall the prince to Flanders. The archduke Leopold, brother of the emperor Ferdinand III, was besieging Lens in Artois. Condé, restored to the troops which had always been victorious under him, led them straight for the archduke. This was the third time he had given battle with disadvantage in numbers. He spoke to his soldiers these simple words: "Friends, remember Rocroi, Freiburg, and Nördlingen!"[2] (August 20th, 1648).

He himself relieved Marshal de Grammont, who was about to surrender with the left wing; he captured General Beck. The archduke saved himself with difficulty with the count of Fuensaldaña. The imperials and the Spaniards composing the army were scattered; they lost more than a hundred banners and thirty-eight pieces of cannon, which was a considerable number for that time. Five thousand prisoners were taken; three thousand men were killed; the rest deserted and the archduke was left without an army. Never since the foundation of the monarchy had the French won so many battles in succession, and ones so noted for military ability and courage.

While the prince of Condé was thus counting the years of his youth in victories, and the duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII, was upholding the reputation of a son of Henry IV and of France by the capture of Gravelines (July, 1644), Courtrai, and Mardyck (November, 1644), the viscount de Turenne had taken Landau, had driven the Spaniards from Treves, and re-established the elector. In November, 1647, with the help of the Swedes under Wrangel, Torstenson's successor, he won the battle of Lawingen, and that of Zusmarshausen (May, 1648). He compelled the elector of Bavaria to leave his states, at the age of almost eighty. The count d'Harcourt took Balaguer and beat the Spaniards. They lost Porto Longone in Italy (1646). Twenty vessels and twenty galleys of France, which composed almost the whole navy as re-established by Richelieu, defeated the Spanish fleet off the Italian coast.

[1 The aged prince of Condé (Henry II de Bourbon) died December 26th, 1646, when the duke d'Enghien (Louis II de Bourbon) assumed his father's title. He came to be known as "The Great Condé," and we shall see much of him in the ensuing pages. He was born at Paris, September 8th, 1621; died, December 11th, 1686. The first prince of Condé (Louis I de Bourbon), whose death at the battle of Jarnac in 1569 will be recalled (see p. 363), was his great-grandfather. This first prince of Condé was the younger brother of Anthony, king of Navarre, the father of King Henry IV. So the Great Condé came honestly by his fighting propensities.]

[2 Some historians refuse to credit Condé with these words. Indeed, Madame de Motteville reports a much less stirring harangue: "My friends, have good courage; we must of necessity fight to-day. It will be useless to back out. For I promise you that all the brave and the cowardly will fight; the ones of good will, the others through compulsion!" "This was perhaps," adds Duruy,[4] "the only kind of language to impress the soldiers at that time."]

This was not all. The French arms had again invaded Lorraine; and Duke Charles IV, a warrior prince, but an inconstant, rash, and unfortunate one, saw himself at the same time deprived of his state by France and kept prisoner by the Spaniards (May, 1644). The allies of France pressed the Austrian power on the north and south. The duke of Albuquerque, the Portuguese general, won the battle of Badajoz from Spain in March, 1645. Torstenson defeated the imperials near Tabor and obtained a complete victory. The prince of Orange, at the head of the Dutch, penetrated as far as Brabant.

The king of Spain, beaten on every side, saw Roussillon and Catalonia in the hands of the French. Naples in revolt against him had just given itself into the hands of the duke of Guise, the last prince of that branch of a house fruitful in illustrious and dangerous men. This one, who had passed only for a bold adventurer, because he did not succeed, had at least the glory of boarding single-handed a bark in the midst of the Spanish fleet and of defending Naples with no other resource than his own courage.

At the sight of so many misfortunes crushing the house of Austria, so many victories accumulated by the French, seconded by the success of their allies, one would have believed that Vienna and Madrid were only waiting to open their gates, and that the emperor and the king of Spain were almost without dominions. Nevertheless these five years of glory, crossed with only a few reverses, brought few real advantages and much spilled blood, but no revolution. If one was to be feared it was for France. She was on the verge of ruin in the midst of this apparent prosperity.

TREATY OF WESTPHALIA (1648 A.D.)

Negotiations for peace had been going on for a long time. Proposed in 1641, conferences were opened April 10th, 1643, in two Westphalian cities — Münster and Osnabrück. The questions for consideration were the altering of the map of Europe after a thirty years' war; of providing the empire with a new constitution; and of regulating the civil and religious rights of the several Christian nations. France was represented at this congress by able negotiators, the count d'Avaux and Abel Servien; but her best diplomats were Condé and Turenne, whose swords had simplified the negotiations by rendering peace a necessity. At the last moment Spain withdrew, hoping to profit by the troubles of the Fronde, then commencing in France. The other countries, in haste to have finished, signed the peace (October 24th, 1648).

During the Thirty Years' War Austria had striven to stifle religious and political liberty in Germany. Austria being defeated, that against which she had fought remained and increased. The Protestants obtained full liberty of conscience, and imperial authority, but lately threatening, was annulled; the princes of the German states, confirmed in the exercise of complete authority over their territories, had the right of alliance with foreign powers so long as these alliances (so read a vain restriction) were "against neither the emperor nor the empire."

The two powers which had achieved the defeat of Austria had stipulated for themselves important indemnities. Sweden gained the island of Rügen, Wismar, western Pomerania with Stettin, the archbishopric of Bremen, and the bishopric of Verden — that is to say, the mouths of the three great German rivers, the Oder, the Elbe, and the Weser — with 5,000,000 crowns and three votes in the diet. France continued to occupy Lorraine, promising

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to restore it to its duke when he should have complied with her conditions. She obtained the empire's renunciation of all right over the Three Bishoprics — Metz, Toul, and Verdun, which she had possessed for a century; over the town of Pinerolo, ceded by the duke of Savoy in 1631; over Alsace, which was now — with the exception of Strasburg — given to France, carrying her boundaries beyond the Vosges as far as the Rhine. She also obtained Breisach, on the right bank of that river, and her right to garrison Philippsburg was recognised; the right of navigation on the Rhine was guaranteed her.

These were great advantages; because, by recovering Alsace, France covered Lorraine on the side of Germany and established herself to the north of Franche-Comté, which since Henry IV she had enveloped on the south; so that the return to France of these two provinces was only a question of time. Not only were her frontiers now better outlined for defence, but she was able to maintain an offensive position. By the acquisition of Pinerolo France planted a foot beyond the Alps in Italy; by Breisach and Philippsburg, beyond the Rhine in Germany. By opening the eyes of the German states to their right to contract foreign alliances France was always able to buy over one or another of their indigent princes, and by guaranteeing the execution of the treaty, she gave herself the right to interfere in German affairs. The empire — being now no more than a sort of confederation of 360 states, Lutheran and Catholic, monarchical and republican, laical and ecclesiastical — became of necessity the theatre for all sorts of intrigues, the battle-field of Europe, as Italy had been at the beginning of modern times, and for the same reasons — division and anarchy.



A French Officer, Middle of Seventeenth Century

The Treaty of Westphalia, which was the foundation for all diplomatic conventions from the middle of the seventeenth century until the French Revolution, put an end to the supremacy of the house of Austria, and rescued the independence of the small states. If the Bourbons had not inherited the ambition of the Habsburgs, and roused against themselves the same coalitions, the Peace of Westphalia would have accomplished the supremacy of France and the political liberty of Europe.

MAZARIN'S DOMESTIC POLICY

While Mazarin gloriously continued the policy of Richelieu, his power in France was being destroyed by factions.[h]

At first he used his power with moderation. He affected, at the beginning of his supremacy, as much of simplicity as Richelieu had displayed of arrogance. Far from employing guards, and keeping up royal splendour,

he had at first the most modest retinue. He was affable and even gentle where his predecessor had shown inflexible pride.

But with all this, taxation was necessary to maintain the war against the Spaniards and against the emperor. The finances of France were, since the death of Henry IV, as badly administered as those of Spain and Germany. The excise offices were in chaos, ignorance was extreme, thievery was paramount. The revenue of the state amounted during the first year of the regency to between fifteen and sixteen million livres. This was quite sufficient if there had been any economy in the ministry; but in 1646 and 1647 there were deficits. The superintendent of the finances was at times a Sienese peasant named Particelli Émery, whose soul was even baser than his birth, and whose extravagance and debauchery aroused the nation to indignation. This man invented burdensome and ridiculous expedients. He created and sold posts of inspectors of fagots, of licensed hay venders, of king's councillors, of wine hawkers; he sold letters of nobility. The debts on the Hôtel-de-Ville at Paris then amounted to only about eleven millions, but the fund-holders were deprived of several quarterly dividends; import duties were increased; several posts of masters of requests (to whom all petitions were intrusted) were created; about eighty thousand crowns of magistrates' salaries were held back.

It is easy to realise how far the minds of the people were aroused against two Italians, both come penniless to France, who had enriched themselves at the expense of the nation and who now had such a hold over them. The parliament of Paris, the masters of requests, the other courts, the fund-holders, rebelled. In vain did Mazarin remove his confidant Émery from office and relegate him to one of his estates — there was indignation that this man should have estates in France. The cardinal was held in abhorrence, although at this very moment he was consummating the great work of the Peace of Westphalia; for it must be noted that this famous treaty and the "day of barricades" are of the same year, 1648. The civil wars began at Paris as they had begun in England, over a little money. In 1647 the parliament of Paris, in verifying the tax edicts, showed itself spiritedly opposed to them. It acquired the confidence of the people by remonstrances which were very wearying to the ministry. But it did not revolt. Its spirit became embittered and hardened by degrees. The populace might rush to arms at once and choose a leader as they had done with Masaniello at Naples; but magistrates and statesmen proceed with more deliberation, and begin by observing the proprieties as far as party spirit will permit.

Cardinal Mazarin had thought that by skilfully dividing the magistracy he would prevent all troubles, but his cunning was met with inflexibility. He withdrew four years' salary from all the higher courts, at the same time remitting the *paulette*: that is to say, exempting the judges from paying the tax devised by Paulet under Henry IV for assuring the magistrates the permanency of their posts and permitting them to sell them. This retrenchment was not an injury, but he did not withdraw the four years' salary from parliament, thinking to disarm it by this favour. But parliament scorned this mark of grace which exposed it to the reproach of preferring its interests to those of the others: and it did not hesitate to issue an *arrêt d'union* with the other courts of justice. Mazarin, who was never able to pronounce French, having said that this *arrêt d'union* was an attacking measure, and having had it vetoed by the council, this single word *union* made him ridiculous, and as one never yields to one that is scorned, parliament became more active.



THE ARREST OF BROUSSEL

[1648 A.D.]

It loudly demanded that all the intendants regarded by the people as extortioners should be recalled, and that the new kind of magistracy instituted under Louis XIII, without the procedure of ordinary forms, should be abolished. This was to please the nation as much as to irritate the court. It desired that, according to the ancient law, no citizen should be put in prison without his natural judges knowing of it within twenty-four hours.

Parliament did more ; it abolished the intendants by a decree with orders to the king's prosecutors in its jurisdiction to inform against them. Thus the hatred of the ministry, supported by the love of the public weal, threatened the court with a revolution. The queen yielded ; she abandoned the intendants and asked only that three be retained. In this she was refused. While these troubles were brewing the prince of Condé won the famous victory at Lens, which crowned his glory. The king, who was only ten years old, exclaimed, "Parliament will be very sorry!" These words make it sufficiently evident that the court looked upon the parliament of Paris as an assembly of rebels. Indeed, the cardinal and his courtiers gave it no other name. But the more the parliamentarians were treated as rebels the more resistance they made.[i]

This state of affairs between ruling power and the parliament expressing the feelings of the people brings us to that remarkable revolt known as the Fronde, "the last echo of the civil wars of the sixteenth century."

"The origin of the name," says Martin,[d] "seems to have been the comparison made between the young and turbulent *conseillers aux enquêtes* and the urchins who gathered in the city ditches to indulge in mimic fights with slings (*frondes*). The malcontents adopted the name of *frondeurs*, and longed for the glory of 'slinging the court well' (*bien fronder la cour*). The first to adopt this title of *frondeur* was, it is said, the councillor Bachaumont, son of the president Le Coigneux." Kitchin[q] says that the name of the Fronde was first adopted by the coadjutor to the archbishop of Paris, Paul de Gondi, of whom we shall presently speak. "The young lords and dames," says Crowe,[g] "who afterwards embraced the party, willingly adopted a name which so well characterised their petulance, and sportive rather than serious rebellion." But the Fronde, sportive though it may have been to the nobles, was the cause of immense misery to the people. Famine and pest walked in its train and the country was enormously depopulated.[a]

FIRST INSURRECTION OF THE FRONDE (1648 A.D.)

The queen and the cardinal resolved to arrest three of the most stubborn magistrates of the parliament : Novion Blancménil president of a court of justice, Charton president of a court of inquiry, and Broussel former councillor-clerk of the grand chamber. They were the tools of party leaders and not leaders themselves. Charton, a man of very limited abilities, was known by the nickname of "I say this," because he always opened and closed his remarks with those words. Broussel had nothing to recommend him but his white hairs, his hatred for the ministry, and a reputation for always raising his voice against the court no matter on what subject. His confrères paid little attention to him, but the populace idolised him.

Instead of arresting them without any hubbub in the silence of the night, the cardinal thought to impress the people by having them arrested in broad daylight, on August 26th, 1648, while the *Te Deum* was being sung at Notre Dame for the victory of Lens and the Swiss of the chamber were carrying into the church the seventy-three banners taken from the enemy. It was

precisely this plan that caused the ruin of the kingdom. Charton escaped, Blancménil was taken without difficulty, but it was not the same with Broussel. An old servant, seeing her master thrown into a coach by Comminges, a lieutenant of the bodyguard, collected a mob. It surrounded the coach, which was smashed to pieces; but the French guards lent assistance to Comminges and got Broussel away from his friends. He was taken out on the road to Sedan. The arrest, far from intimidating the people, irritated and emboldened them. Shops were closed. The great iron chains which at that time were at the entrance to the principal streets were stretched across them; barricades were built, and four hundred thousand throats cried "Liberty and Broussel!" [i]

The marshal de la Meilleraie with two hundred guards tried to disperse them; he drove some back to the Pont Neuf, where his progress was impeded, and where he met Paul de Gondi, coadjutor of the archbishop of Paris, so famous later under the name of Cardinal de Retz, who had rushed out in his robes amongst the mob. After having harangued and momentarily tranquillised the populace, De Retz hurried with the marshal to the Palais Royal, to represent the alarming state of the city to the queen. Anne of Austria, who knew the coadjutor's character, suspected him as one more likely to throw oil than water on the flame. "It is rebellion itself to imagine that the people can rebel," said she; "you would have me deliver Broussel; I will first strangle him with these hands." This resentment, seconded by the jeers of the court, had the ill effect of converting De Retz into a dangerous enemy. [j]

The Day of the Barricades (August 27th, 1648)

It is difficult to reconcile all the details of what followed, related by Cardinal de Retz,[j] Madame de Motteville,[k] Advocate-General Talon, and many others; but all agree upon the principal points. During the night which followed the riot the queen had about two thousand troopers, quartered a few leagues from Paris, come into the city to protect the king's residence. The chancellor Séguier had already proceeded to the parliament accompanied by a lieutenant and several archers to quash all its decrees and even, it is said, to suspend that body.

But during that very night the factionists assembled at the house of De Retz, and everything was arranged to arm the city. The chancellor's coach was stopped and overturned. He escaped with difficulty, with his daughter the duchess de Sully, who in spite of him had insisted on accompanying him. He retired in disorder into the hôtel de Luynes, jostled and insulted by the populace. The civil lieutenant now took him into his coach, and escorted by two Swiss companies and a squadron of gendarmes attempted to bring him to the Palais Royal. The people fired on them; several were killed and the duchess de Sully was wounded in the arm.

Two hundred barricades were formed in an instant; they were pushed to within a hundred paces of the Palais Royal. The soldiers, after seeing several of their number fall, retreated and looked to see what the bourgeois were going to do. The parliament marched on foot in a body to the queen, across the barricades which were lowered before it, and demanded the liberation of its imprisoned members. The queen was obliged to set them free. [i]

The barricades were immediately levelled, and the people ceased their turbulence and clamour. "Never was disorder more orderly managed," says Madame de Motteville; [k] "the citizens who had taken up arms to prevent the ascendency of the rabble and to check pillage were little more peaceable than

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the populace itself, and roared for the liberation of Broussel with equal violence." The court in yielding had but temporised, however; and it soon made its escape from the capital to St. Germain. Such was the first insurrection of the Fronde.*g*

Cardinal de Retz has boasted of having all by himself armed the whole of Paris on that day (August 27th, 1648), which has been called the "Day of the Barricades" and which was the second of its kind. This singular man is the first bishop of France to plan a civil war without religion for a pretext. He has described himself in his *Mémoires*,*j* written in a grandiose manner with the impetuosity of genius and an unevenness which are the mirror of his conduct. He was a man who, from the depths of debauchery and the infamous consequences which it brings, preached to the people and made them idolise him. He breathed faction and conspiracy; he had been at the age of twenty-three the soul of a conspiracy against the life of Richelieu; he was the author of the barricades; he precipitated parliament into cabals and the people into seditions. His extreme vanity made him undertake bold crimes in order that they might be talked about. It was this same vanity that made him repeat so often, "I am of a house of Florence as ancient as that of the greatest princes"[1]—he whose ancestors had been merchants like so many of his compatriots.*i*



A FRENCH OFFICER, MIDDLE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The hopes of the queen were now in the young prince of Condé. But that young hero, though opposed to the party of the *importants*, was not yet prepared to martyrise his popularity for Mazarin. He proposed his mediation. Mazarin accepted it, well knowing how soon the hot prince would lose patience at the formal and democratic pleadings of the parliamentary statesmen. De Retz, now the leading man of the popular party, made every effort to gain Condé, who replied, "My name is Louis de Bourbon: I will not shake the throne." Through his means negotiations were entered into with the court; the elders of the parliament, and Molé, the president, at their head, being anxious to avoid a civil war, whilst the violent party, bestowing on the pacific chiefs the nickname of *barbons*, pushed matters to extremities. They had revived an old law, passed after the fall of the marshal D'Ancre, which prohibited the administration of the kingdom by foreigners, thus aiming at Mazarin. Still a second accommodation took place: a royal declaration, dated the 28th of October [the very day of the signing of the Peace of Westphalia], accepted the principal articles of the plan of reformation, and the court returned to the capital.

[1 Cardinal de Retz was the descendant of a Florentine family that came to the court of France in the suite of Catherine de' Medici; it was his grand-uncle who figured so prominently in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. See above, pp. 369, 399.]

This proved but a hollow truce, entered into by both parties out of respect for Condé, whom both feared and both hoped to gain. The popular party was suspicious; De Retz continued his intrigues; whilst the queen urged Condé to make preparations for defending the royal authority by force. It has been the fate of all attempts to establish liberty in France to be frustrated, not by the opposition of the aristocracy, but by their affecting to abet and adopt its principles.

In the Fronde, the magistracy of Paris, supported by the citizens, endeavoured to supply the want of a national assembly. They framed a constitution; forced it on the court without effusion of blood; and might have succeeded in upholding and perhaps ameliorating it, when the young noblesse interfered, drove the citizens to insurrection first, then to submission, and for the sake of their selfish quarrels, which all their light-heartedness and valour cannot redeem, they sacrificed the last hope that the French had of even a degree of liberty; they pierced the last plank that shut out the overwhelming ocean of despotism. We certainly, of the present day, can look but with a small degree of hope or approbation on a judicial body which grasps at legislative power. But had the noblesse known its true interests, and acted its natural part of mediator, the states-general might have superseded the parliament in its political functions; the moderation of the provincial deputies would have tempered the ardour of the capital, and the ever consecutive extremes of insurrection and pusillanimous submission might both have been avoided.

The old party of the *importants* now roused itself. The duke de Beaufort escaped from prison. The duke de Bouillon, smarting under the loss of Sedan, joined counsels with him; and both intrigued with the violent men in the parliament to form an insurrection against the court. The duchess de Longueville brought her charms to support the same cause: these decided La Rochefoucauld, her lover, to adopt it. She used all her influence to the same effect with her brother Condé in vain. In default of him, the prince of Conti, his brother, was won over. No cause could subsist, in the opinion of these gentlemen, unless it could boast the name of a prince of the blood. The duchess de Chevreuse, though still in exile, corresponded with the party, and promised to it the accession of the princes of Lorraine. Madame de Montbazon was found united in the same cause with her rival, Madame de Longueville. The marshal D'Hocquincourt offered the strong and important fortress which he commanded, in homage to the charms of the former. "Péronne," wrote he to her, "is at the disposal of the fairest of the fair." A crowd of nobles gaily joined the conspiracy; and the court was once more obliged to make its escape from Paris, and retire to St. Germain, in January, 1649.[1]

Strong and extreme measures were at last resolved upon, although not prepared with that vigour and foresight that Richelieu would have displayed. Troops, under Condé and the duke of Orleans, prepared to invest Paris, and occupied on either side of the city the bridges of Charenton and St. Cloud; but with only 12,000 men, the utmost of the royalist force, it was impossible to invest the metropolis. A royal order, commanding the

[1 According to Voltaire, 'so low were the royal resources that almost the entire court had to sleep, while at St. Germain, on straw. They were obliged to leave the crown jewels as security with the usurers. The young king often lacked necessities. The pages of his chamber were dismissed because there were no means to keep them. At the same time Louis' aunt, Henrietta Maria of England, in refuge at Paris, was reduced to the extremes of poverty; her daughter, afterwards married to Louis' brother, had to stay in bed to keep warm.']

[1649 A.D.]

parliament to retire to Montargis, was treated by them with contempt. A civic guard was raised, to the number of 12,000, the chief officers, it is remarkable, being lawyers and officers of parliament; the provost of the merchants, however, retained the supreme command. In addition to these, a stipendiary force of 20,000 men was raised in a few days, by means of a house tax, fixed at so much for every plain house-door, and double the sum for the gate which admitted a carriage. The noblesse did not forget their petty ambition, even in adopting the bourgeois cause. The duke d'Elbeuf had first seized on the chief command, and was reluctant to yield it to the prince of Conti. The duke de Beaufort, however, was the most popular chief, owing to his affable manners and handsome person. He was called the *roi des halles* (the king of the markets). The war, if it can be called such, commenced by the attack of the Bastille, at which the ladies of the party assisted. It surrendered gallantly to these fascinating adversaries. On his side, Condé began to press towards the walls; and some skirmishes took place, in which a few were slain, amongst others the duke de Châtillon.

Two circumstances soon after occurred that much altered the views and shook the resolutions of the court. One was the defection of Turenne, who, won over by his brother the duke de Bouillon, promised to march the army, which he commanded on the Rhine, to the support of the Fronde; the other was the connection of the *frondeur* nobles with Spain, and the public reception by the parliament of an envoy from that power. This savoured of the inveteracy of the league. The elder magistrates, and principally Molé the president, indignant at this alliance with the enemies of the country, began to exert themselves to frustrate the violent projects of the young noblesse, and to seek an accommodation with the court. The majority of the parliament, already disgusted with the froward, frivolous, and arrogant behaviour of the nobles, came so far into the same views, that Molé himself, with some of his brethren, was despatched to the queen at Ruel, to essay an accommodation. The court grasped at the opportunity, but still negotiated for advantages; whilst Bouillon stirred the populace of Paris against the moderation of the parliament, and urged the alliance with Spain. Molé, determined to disappoint the ambitious duke, signed a treaty with the court in haste, on the 11th of March, ere Turenne could arrive, or Spain despatch its aid.

Great was the indignation of the populace, and of the seditious leaders, at the news of this peace. All cried out treason. Bouillon was confounded, and De Retz perplexed. Molé knew that he risked his life by thus balking the seditious ardour of both the nobles and the mob; but the thought gave him courage, not hesitation. The critical moment was that of declaring the treaty to the assembled parliament. A ferocious crowd, crying "Treason! no peace! no Mazarin!" surrounded the Palais de Justice; and the throng within its walls was scarcely less hostile or less calm. Molé stood up and read the treaty; clamour instantly covered his voice. The prince of Conti exclaimed against a peace concluded without his knowledge, and that of the nobles his friends. "You, then, are the cause," retorted Molé: "whilst we were at Ruel, you were treating with the enemies of France; you were inviting the archduke, the Spaniard, and the foe to invade the kingdom." "It is not without the consent of several members of the parliament that we took this step," replied the prince, not denying the charge. "Name them," was Molé's instant retort; "name the traitors, that we may proceed to try and judge them."

The firmness of the president at once awed the nobles, and won over the majority of the assembled magistrates to support him. The only hope of

the favourers of sedition was in the rabble, which, incensed and tumultuous, had penetrated into the passages and corridors of the palace. Some, with poniards and arms, demanded the head of the president. "Give us up the *grande barbe*" (long beard); so they called the venerable magistrate. Others shouted the word "Republic." Molé heard them with unshaken courage. Those around besought him to make his escape by a postern. "Justice never skulks," replied Molé, "nor will I, its representative. I may perish, but will never commit an act of cowardice, which would give hardihood to the mob." Accordant to this magnanimous resolution, the chief magistrate walked boldly down the principal staircase through the mob, awing the most audacious by his firmness. Even De Retz *j* was lost in admiration; and has recorded that he could perceive in the countenance of Molé, then threatened by the fury of the multitude, not a motion that did not indicate imperturbable firmness, and at the same time a presence and elevation of mind greater than firmness, and every way supernatural. This is one of the noblest exhibitions of courage which history has recorded.



FRENCH MAN-OF-WAR, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

When the chiefs of sedition saw that they could not conquer, and that the treaty would pass in their despite, each hastened to make his private offers and demands of the court. Bouillon wanted Sedan; Turenne, Alsace; Elbeuf, the government of Picardy; Beaufort, to be admiral. They were not listened to. Angered and resolved to proceed to extremities, they wrote to Turenne to advance, and to the archduke to invade the north. But Turenne's treason was defeated by Erlach, commander of the Swiss — himself obliged to fly; and the archduke, his support failing, retreated. Thus the moderate portion of the parliament, supported by the civic guard, succeeded in restoring peace with the court, despite the opposition of the nobles and the mob. The reader will not fail to remark how distinct these several classes kept from each other, even when in alliance and fighting the same battles; a state of society that has not ceased at the present day to characterise France: whilst in England, the blending of the lower ranks of the nobly born with the higher ranks of the industrious and unennobled, effected by the habits and institutions of the country, have rendered the pernicious line of demarcation betwixt castes and classes almost invisible to the historian.

[1649–1650 A.D.]

SECOND ACT OF THE FRONDE; ARREST OF CONDÉ

The scene now shifts, and another act of the Fronde commences, displaying the chief actors in altogether new characters and dresses. No sooner was the peace declared than the prince of Condé, jealous of the cardinal, united with the nobles whom he so lately combated: he visited his sister, Madame de Longueville, became reconciled to her and to La Rochefoucauld; the duke de Beaufort and the coadjutor being the only two that remained at the same time hostile to Mazarin and jealous of Condé. A few nobles, however, were not sufficient to give weight to the demands of the prince, and Mazarin resisted them. The prince, in consequence, saw the coadjutor, and planned, or pretended to form, an alliance with him and the violent members of the parliament. The court, terrified at the prospect of being so abandoned, and of seeing Condé at the head of the frondeurs, granted all the desires of the latter, who, ashamed to break with his new allies, yet left without a pretext to continue his quarrel with Mazarin, "changed his mind three hundred times in three days." The haughty prince, who hated the parliament and the rabble, at last decided to disappoint the coadjutor; he became reconciled to Mazarin, and of course quarrelled with the frondeurs, whom he accused of an attempt to assassinate him. The same imprudence, the same haughtiness, petulance, and overbearing temper marked the prince to whichever side he leaned, and disgusted both. As a friend he was even more troublesome than as an enemy: Mazarin and the queen felt this; they could no longer tolerate his insolence; and the present moment, as he had left himself no friends in any party, seemed the best opportunity for being revenged on him.

To arrest and send the prince to prison was the old monarchic mode of treating the froward; but one of the articles stipulated by the parliament, and secured to them in the last treaty, was that every prisoner should be interrogated in four-and-twenty hours, and delivered over to his lawful judges. To infringe upon this law might rouse the parliament, and re-excite the rebellion of the Parisians. To secure himself against such an event, Mazarin leagued with — whom? The coadjutor himself, and the most violent of the frondeurs! They, the populace sharing their sentiments, hated Condé for his ancient enmity and his late desertion. De Retz and Mazarin, accordingly, had interviews, the former entering the Palais Royal by night in disguise. The consequence of this secret understanding soon appeared. The prince of Condé, the prince of Conti, his brother, and the duke de Longueville were arrested at the door of the council-chamber, and sent to Vincennes in January, 1650. The dukes de Bouillon and de la Rochefoucauld, as well as the duchess de Longueville, succeeded in escaping; the princesses of Condé were ordered to retire to Chantilly. Bonfires, illuminations, and every sign of joy on the part of the Parisians marked this extreme measure. The popular hatred of Condé and confidence in De Retz lulled for the moment their dislike of the cardinal Mazarin.

Two events which mark the spirit of the time, and which occurred previous to the prince's arrest, must not be passed over. The honour of a *tabouret*, or stool at court, was only granted to the ladies of princes of sovereign houses, or to the wives of dukes and peers. Exceptions, however, had been made in favour of the younger branches of the Rohans, the La Trémouilles, and the family of Bouillon. La Rochefoucauld pretended to the same distinction: the prince of Condé supported his claim. The noblesse instantly assembled to the number of eight hundred, and formed a protest

against such pretensions, which went, they said, to destroy the natural equality that existed amongst all gently born. The dispute led to a discussion of political rights and principles, then the dangerous mania of the age, and some voices clamoured for the states-general. The French noblesse are entitled certainly to the credit of having demanded these national assemblies at a time when the judicial body or parliament, in whom the favour and confidence of the people were then centred, deprecated any such proposition. It may be asked why the chiefs of the judicature, and such upright lovers of liberty as Molé, were opposed to the convocation of the states-general. The answer is that the example of England, then in the mouths and minds of many, terrified them, and made them prefer their own body as a constitutional check, to such a representative assembly as that which, in the neighbouring kingdom, had begun with civil war, and ended in regicide and despotism. It must be owned they had some cause for fear. A revolution is bad enough; but an imitative revolution, a parody of such a great event, is to be deprecated tenfold, as incurring all the evils and few of the advantages of the convulsion.

Already the people of Paris talked of republics and liberty: the monarchy, they said, was too old, and it was time it should expire. Nay, the duke de Bouillon himself, adopting the revolutionary phrase, proposed on one occasion to purge the parliament. The taste for assembling and debating was general. The annuities charged on the Hôtel-de-Ville were suspended by the troubles: three thousand of these fund-holders, chiefly citizens of Paris, met, drew up resolutions, petitioned, and clothed themselves in black, the uniform of the tiers or third estate. Molé instantly rebuked them, as attempting to form a *chambre de communes*, a house of commons. The citizens were indignant at the comparison: and this very reproach, that they were imitating the commons of England, had great effect in dissipating their assembly.

RESISTANCE OF BORDEAUX (1650 A.D.)

Principles, however, were soon forgotten in the general sympathy which the misfortunes of Condé excited. The haughtiness, the imprudences of the hero of Rocroi and Lens were now forgotten; and the nobility began to rally to his cause as their own. The court were at first successful in reducing Normandy, the government of the duke de Longueville; but in Languedoc and the provinces on the Gironde, the dukes de la Rochefoucauld and de Bouillon soon gathered an army of adherents, and were joined by the wife and infant son of the prince.

Clémence de Maillé, princess of Condé, had hitherto commanded little respect either from the world or from her husband, who, having married her merely as the niece of Cardinal Richelieu, was ashamed of her humble origin and his own condescension. She now however displayed a heroism and an attachment worthy of the spouse of the Great Condé. The princess escaped with her young son, the duke d'Enghien, from Chantilly, and after some delay in a fortified place, joined the dukes de la Rochefoucauld and de Bouillon in the south. But the noblesse was not then the predominant order in the state, and she was obliged to seek more powerful protection in the parliament of Bordeaux. This provincial court of justice was highly incensed against the duke d'Épernon, governor of Languedoc; and consequently ill-disposed towards the queen and the cardinal, who seconded him. They of course embraced with ardour the new laws established by the parliament of Paris, which gave to the courts of magistracy power to control

[1650 A.D.]

the measures of government, and which forbade arrests without bringing the accused to speedy trial. They could little comprehend the manœuvres by which De Retz and his violent party induced the parliament of Paris to overlook the imprisonment of Condé. They were eager to take his part and to admit the princess within their walls; but at the same time had considerable distrust of the nobles who supported her, and who were negotiating with Spain. To satisfy these scruples, the princess entered Bordeaux alone; but the popular clamour drowning the voice of the magistrates, she soon had the city at her command, and the dukes de Bouillon and de la Rochefoucauld entered with their troops and took the command.



MAZARIN

The queen and Mazarin led the young king and an army commanded by the marshal De la Meilleraie to reduce Bordeaux. Its first feat was to raze Verteuil, the famous château of the La Rochefoucauld family, a barbarous act, and inconceivable in Mazarin, who loved the arts. Bordeaux was then invested, and its suburb was carried after a valiant defence, in which La Rochefoucauld displayed remarkable gallantry. To gain footing in the town itself was soon found impossible, such was the obstinacy of the armed citizens. Whilst Mazarin and the court thus lay encamped before Bordeaux, Turenne had entered the north of France, and was marching without opposition towards the capital, intending to liberate the princes from Vincennes. Condé, confined in the donjon of that castle, whiled away his captivity by cultivating the few flowers that the terrace of his window could contain. "Who would have thought," exclaimed he, "in learning the resistance of Bordeaux, "that my wife should be fighting whilst I was gardening!" The princes were removed from Vincennes to the safer retreat of Marcoussis, and Turenne, who, fearing to indispose the parliament of Paris by appearing at the head of foreign troops, retired again towards the frontier.

DISGRACE AND EXILE OF MAZARIN (1650-1651 A.D.)

The coadjutor and the violent frondeurs grew weary of their alliance with Mazarin, into which their fear and hatred of Condé had alone induced them to enter. They not only found Mazarin ungrateful and insincere, refusing even to De Retz the cardinal's hat that he demanded, but their popularity, which was their chief force, and their influence over the parliament. were rapidly diminishing from their union with the court. Mazarin, suspecting the intention of the frondeurs, and alarmed by the march of

Turenne, granted peace to Bordeaux, concluding more a truce than a treaty with the princess of Condé, La Rochefoucauld, and Bouillon.

The minister then returned to Paris, where he found the parliament no longer silent as to the arrest of Condé, but prepared to expostulate, and demand his release. Mazarin caused the princes to be instantly conveyed from Marcoussis to La Havre, where they were still more in his individual power. La Rochefoucauld and Bouillon also returned to Paris; and a series of intrigues took place; these partisans of Condé negotiating at the same time both with the coadjutor and with Mazarin for his release. An alliance with either would effect this, and La Rochefoucauld was in doubt. The coadjutor, in the habit of a cavalier, came by night to the rendezvous at the house of the princess palatine. La Rochefoucauld went in equal secrecy to the Palais Royal. The over-caution of the cardinal lost his cause. La Rochefoucauld pressed him at once to conclude the alliance, and give orders that Condé should be set at liberty. Mazarin hesitated. Unprincipled as he was himself, he could not believe it possible that the friends of Condé could unite with De Retz. La Rochefoucauld warned the cardinal in parting that the morrow would be too late. Mazarin smiled incredulity and irresolution; and the duke, hurrying to the other place of rendezvous, concluded the agreement with the coadjutor. The effects of this alliance were immediately manifest. The majority of the parliament clamoured for the release of Condé, and addressed the queen on the subject. It was necessary to yield; and Mazarin saw that, deserted by all parties, he would infallibly be the victim.

In his rage he anathematised the parliament before the whole court, called it an English house of commons, compared the coadjutor De Retz to Cromwell and himself to Strafford, and declared that, in sacrificing its minister to popular clamour, the crown would, as in the case of Strafford, sacrifice itself. This conversation, being reported to the parliament by De Retz, raised a storm indescribable, and terminated in an address to the queen, desiring that Mazarin should be banished from her councils, and that the prince should be liberated. Nought was left the cardinal but flight. He took his departure immediately. It was agreed that the queen and young king were to follow him, and that, possessed of La Havre and the persons of the princes, they would be able either by open war or negotiation to bring the parliament and the frondeurs to more reasonable terms. This project however failed, through the cunning and activity of the coadjutor, who, learning the queen's intention of departing, raised a mob round the palace, and made her virtually a prisoner there. Cardinal Mazarin alone found himself without authority. He could not even gain entrance into Havre unless unattended. He entered, nevertheless, saw the captive princes of Condé, Conti, and Longueville, endeavoured to cajole them, and set them at liberty, without receiving in return a single mark of gratitude or regard. Thus every way disappointed, Mazarin resigned himself to his disgrace, and left the kingdom.[1]

CONDÉ IN POWER (1651 A.D.)

The prince of Condé was now all-powerful — the parliament, the Fronde, the noblesse, the populace, had all rallied to him; the minister was in exile, the queen a prisoner. Many blamed him for not setting aside Anne of Austria, and assuming the regency; but he was totally without the qualities

[1 He went first to Liège and afterwards to Cologne.]

[1651 A.D.]

requisite for taking advantage of his position ; he was too lazy, too confident, too generous, too rash : and, making not a single exertion, the several parties that had united to compel at once his release and the exile of the minister were allowed again to fall asunder, and abandon to the court the recovery of its ancient influence. The noblesse at this period were animated with a strong desire to imitate the magistracy, and, by remaining united, to restore or re-establish the influence of the aristocracy, in opposition both to crown and judicature. They assembled in the convent of the Cordeliers (afterwards doomed to hold a club of a very different kind, that of Danton), and formed a house of peers, discussing state affairs, and fixing the privileges of the nobles. The parliament took fire at this, and forbade the assemblies. The noblesse looked to Condé to head them ; but he, without principle or aim, and deeming his interests, as prince of the blood, distinct from those of the aristocracy, held back at this crisis. The noblesse called the assembly of the church, then sitting, to their aid, who protested, and complained that the parliament had altered the ancient constitution of the kingdom, by adding themselves as a fourth and spurious estate to the three established ones of king, lords, and commons. Despite of this, the parliament had force and the popular feeling on its side. The noblesse were obliged to succumb, and dissolved their assembly ; not, however, before they had recourse to the queen and the royal authority, who issued a declaration, promising to convoke the states-general for the following September.

Here the queen recovered consideration and authority sufficient to enable her to aim at and grasp more, by allying with the prince of Condé. One of the stipulations betwixt them was that the marriage should be broken off betwixt the prince of Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. The coadjutor, connected by gallantry and friendship with the family of Chevreuse, was indignant at this, and a quarrel ensued betwixt Condé and the old party of the Fronde. Hence another scene in the drama, which represents Condé insulted by those very men who had been so instrumental in releasing him. De Retz and the prince nearly came to blows in the Palais de Justice ; and the former had almost fallen a victim to the passion of La Rochefoucauld, who jammed the coadjutor betwixt two folding doors till he was almost suffocated : the duke at the same time called to one of his friends to stab De Retz, an injunction that was not obeyed, and perhaps not intended to be obeyed. It is, nevertheless, startling to the modern reader to find the courtly author of the *Maximes* engaged personally in the office and using the language of the assassin.

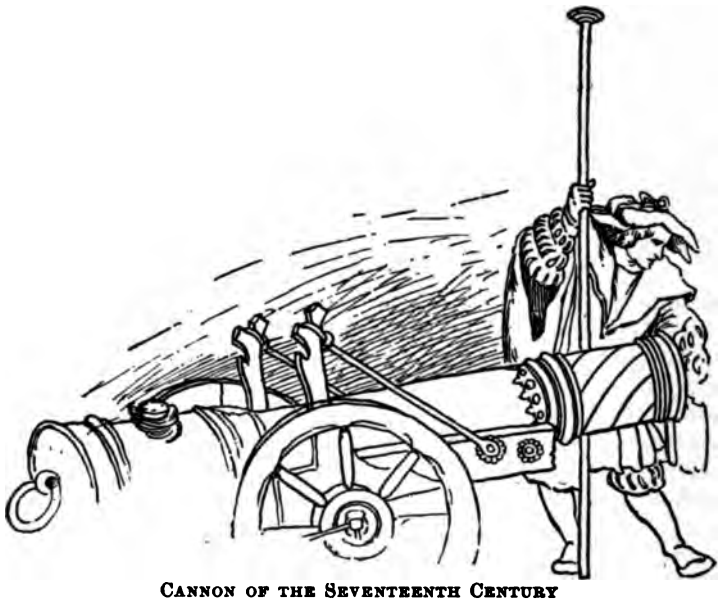
The consequence of these dissensions was the recovery of her authority by Anne of Austria, who, in affecting to ally with Condé, was merely enticing him to disgust and desert the Fronde. This achieved, she flung off the mask, and Condé found himself as much detested by all parties as a few months back he was their favourite and their rallying word. The prince, thus deserted, endeavoured to make common cause with the noblesse, and clamoured for the states-general ; but it was too late : the parliament united with the court in opposing their convocation, and Condé in despair retired from Paris, obliged to seek support in civil war and an alliance with Spain.

RETURN OF MAZARIN (1651 A.D.)

In September, 1651, Louis XIV, then approaching fourteen years of age, was declared to have completed his minority. The day was celebrated with great magnificence. The royal authority remained, however, as before, in the

hands of the queen: her only thought was the recall of Mazarin. The attachment borne by Anne to this prelate-minister is inexplicable. She might have reigned supreme, and been the arbiter betwixt contending parties, could she have consented to leave Mazarin in exile. De Retz endeavoured to impress this necessity upon her; but power appeared to her worthless without the cardinal; and no sooner had Condé broken with the parliament, and burst into war against the court, than the minister prepared to return. He levied an army, made an attempt on Brissac, and soon after joined the court at Poitiers, taking as usual the chief seat in the council.*g*

At the first news of his return, Gaston of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII, who had demanded the removal of the cardinal, levied troops in Paris without knowing for what they would be employed. Parliament renewed its decrees; it proscribed Mazarin and put a price on his head. This proscription tempted



CANNON OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

no one to earn the 50,000 crowns, which, after all, would never have been paid. With another nation and in another age, such a decree would have found executors; but here it served simply to incite fresh pleasantries. The Blots and the Marignys, wits, who carried gaiety into the tumult of these troubles, caused to be placarded all over Paris a distribution of the 50,000 crowns—so much for whoever should cut off the cardinal's nose, and so much for an ear, so much for an eye, so much to make him a eunuch. This ridicule was all the effect of the proscription against the minister's person, but his furniture and library were sold by a second decree. This money was destined for the assassin's pay, but it was dissipated by the depositaries, like all funds that had been raised hitherto. The cardinal on his side used against his enemies neither poison nor steel and, in spite of the bitterness and madness of so much partisanship and hatred, no great crimes were committed. The party leaders were less cruel and the people less furious than in the days of the league—this was not a war of religion.

The spirit of madness which reigned at this time so possessed the whole body of the parliament that, after having solemnly ordered an assassination

which everyone ridiculed, it passed a decree by which several councillors should betake themselves to the frontier for information against the army of Cardinal Mazarin: that is to say, the royal army. Meanwhile the king interdicted the parliament of Paris and transferred it to Pontoise. Fourteen members attached to the court obeyed; the others resisted. There were now two parliaments, which, to cap the confusion, thundered against each other with reciprocating decrees, as in the days of Henry IV and Charles VI.

It was precisely at the time when this company was going to extremities with the king's minister that it declared the prince of Condé, who had only armed himself against this minister, guilty of *lèse majesté;* and by a turn of mind which its preceding steps could alone make credible, it ordered the new troops of Gaston, duke of Orleans, to march against Mazarin and forbade at the same time any money from the public receipts to be used in maintaining them. We can expect nought else from a company of magistrates, thrown out of their proper sphere, knowing not their rights, their real power, political affairs, or war, assembling and deciding amid tumult, making decisions of which they had no thought the day before, and at which they themselves were afterwards astonished. The parliament of Bordeaux was then serving the prince of Condé, but it kept to a little more rational conduct, because being further removed from the court it was less agitated by opposing factions. More important matters were interesting the whole of France.

THE LAST PHASE OF THE FRONDE

Condé, leagued with the Spaniards, was on a campaign against the king; and Turenne, having quitted these same Spaniards, with whom he had been beaten at Rethel, had just made his peace with the court and was in command of the royal army. The exhausted finances did not permit either of the two parties to maintain great armies, but small ones did not the less decide the fate of the state. Louis XIV, brought up in adversity, went with his mother, his brother, and Cardinal Mazarin from province to province, without having as many troops about his person, by a great deal, as he had afterwards for a single guard in times of peace. Five to six thousand men, some sent from Spain, others raised by the prince of Condé's partisans, pursued him into the very heart of his kingdom.

Meanwhile the prince of Condé hastened from Bordeaux to Montauban, taking towns and everywhere increasing his party. All the hope of the court lay in Marshal Turenne. The royal army found itself near Gien on the Loire. The opposing force of Condé was some leagues away, under the orders of the dukes de Nemours and de Beaufort. The duke de Beaufort was incapable of commanding anything. The duke de Nemours was braver and more amiable than he was skilful. Both together had demoralised their army. The soldiers of Condé knew that their leader was a hundred leagues away and believed themselves lost, when, in the middle of the night, a courier presented himself at the outposts in the forest of Orleans. The sentinels recognised in this courier the prince of Condé himself, who had come all the way across France from Agen, with many adventures and always in disguise, to place himself at the head of his army.

His presence did much and his unexpected arrival still more. The royal army was divided into two corps. April 7th, 1652, Condé fell upon that which was at Bléneau, commanded by Marshal d'Hocquincourt, and his corps was dissipated as quickly as it had been attacked. Turenne could not even be warned. The terrified Mazarin hastened to Gien in the middle of

the night to awaken the sleeping king and himself tell him the news. The little court was in consternation; they proposed to save the king by flight and to conduct him secretly to Bourges. The victorious Condé drew near to Gien; the desolation and the fear increased. Turenne reassured their spirits by his firmness and saved the court by his skill. With the few troops that remained to him he made such fortunate movements that he prevented Condé from following up his advantage. It is difficult to decide which won the more honours, the victorious Condé or Turenne who had robbed him of the fruits of victory.[1] It is true that in this fight at Bléneau not four hundred men were killed; but the prince of Condé was none the less on the point of making himself master of the entire royal family, and of having in his hands his enemy Cardinal Mazarin. It would be hard to find in history any smaller battle with greater interest and more pressing danger.

Condé, who did not flatter himself that he could surprise Turenne, as he had done Hocquincourt, marched his army towards Paris. He hastened to that city to enjoy his glory and the favourable disposition of a blind populace. The admiration they had for his last fight,—all of whose details had exaggerated the hate that was borne for Mazarin,—the name and the presence of the Great Condé, seemed at first to make him absolute master of the capital; but at the bottom all minds were divided. The coadjutor—now become Cardinal de Retz, reconciled in appearance with the court which feared him and which he defied—was no longer the master of the people and no longer played the principal rôle. He ruled the duke of Orleans and was opposed by Condé. Parliament wavered between the court, the duke of Orleans, and the prince. Although all were in accord in crying down Mazarin, each one was nursing his own particular interests in secret; the people were a stormy sea whose waves were driven at chance by many contrary winds.

Condé hoped to find the parliament his ally against Mazarin: but the stern magistrates, though firm in their abhorrence of that minister, were not more favourable to Condé, and openly reproached him with his Spanish alliance. From the parliament he did not scruple to appeal to the people, whose lowest class rose in tumult, and threatened the magistrates. The very courts proved no refuge: councillors and judges were insulted and even beaten as "Mazarins."

Condé, thus disappointed in the support of the parliament, and of the respectable citizens, could not cope unaided with the royal army. The Parisian rabble, very forward in a riot, could not be made to stand the fire of regular troops. The prince had recourse to the Spaniards, who, themselves busied in the sieges of Gravelines and Dunkirk, induced the duke of Lorraine to march into France and support Condé. The skilful strategy of Turenne, however, compelled this new auxiliary to retreat; and the prince, after a fresh attempt to raise sedition in the capital and control the parliament, was reduced to fight Turenne with far inferior forces. The latter drove him from St. Cloud, and Condé marched to take post at Charenton,

[1 In comparing these great rivals, Kitchin says: "It has been well said of these two masters in war, that as Condé grew older he lost his early fire and military insight, without becoming wiser or more prudent, while each campaign made Turenne more daring as well as more skilful. The careers of the two great soldiers form a striking contrast: it is genius without industry pitted against high talent combined with infinite painstaking, and a belief in the scientific treatment of the art of war. The more brilliant Condé was sure to fail when pitted against Turenne." Vicomte de Turenne (Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne) was a grandson of William the Silent. He was born in 1611 (September 11th, at Sedan), and was therefore now just over forty. Condé was ten years younger (born September 8th, 1621). The span of life of each of the great generals was destined to compass almost exactly the same period; Turenne being just under sixty-four, Condé just over sixty-five, at death.]

[1652 A.D.]

when, his rival pressing him closely, as he defiled round the walls of Paris, the prince was obliged to throw himself into the faubourg St. Antoine, behind the entrenchments formerly raised for their defence by the inhabitants.

Battle of St. Antoine (July 2nd, 1652)

The gate of Paris called St. Antoine was then immediately under the Bastille, the cannon of which swept the three roads diverging from it. Condé, denied entrance into the city, was still secure from attack on this side; and, posted in the central position of the gate St. Antoine, he determined to make head against the royalists, who approached to attack him by the three roads. Mazarin and Louis XIV were on the heights, now covered with the cemetery of Père Lachaise, spectators of the ensuing action, the young monarch being most anxious to witness the destruction of this rebellious prince.

The triple attack commenced: that on the prince's left, commanded by three sworn and personal enemies to him, was defeated by his valour, the chiefs all perishing. The hero then rushed to defend the central street: he met Turenne in person, and there the conflict was more doubtful. "Did you see Condé during the action?" asked someone of Turenne when the affair was over. "I must have seen a dozen Condés," was the reply: "he multiplied himself." On the right the action was most bloody: the nobles of the prince's party were almost all slain or wounded there, amongst the rest La Rochefoucauld, who, struck on the head, was carried off by his wounded son. Turenne was the most powerful; and no chance appeared of Condé's saving himself and the relics of his army, when the gate of St. Antoine unexpectedly opened to receive him, the cannon of the Bastille at the same time sending their fire up the three attacked streets, and thus effectually checking the progress of the royalists.

This well-timed succour came from Mademoiselle de Montpensier, daughter of the duke of Orleans, whose sympathy for the heroic Condé, now in distress, was aided by the clamours of the populace, enraged at beholding a rash and imprudent but still generous prince sacrificed to the detested Mazarin. She wrung from the municipal officers the orders for opening the gates; herself directed the firing of the guns of the Bastille; nay, her hand is said to have applied the match. Mademoiselle had aspired to the hand of Condé, to that of the king, and might hope at least to espouse a sovereign prince. But Mazarin observed, on seeing the fire of the Bastille, and knowing who commanded it, "That shot has killed the husband of Mademoiselle."[g]

SECOND EXILE OF MAZARIN

After this bloody and useless combat of St. Antoine the king could not return to Paris; and the prince did not remain there long. Popular feeling and the murder of several citizens, for which he was believed to be responsible, made him odious to the people. [He fled from Paris and joined the Spanish army, October, 1652.] However, he still had his faction in the parliament. This body, now intimidated by a wandering court, and driven after a fashion from the capital to Pontoise, pressed by the cabals of the duke of Orleans and the prince, declared, by a decree, the duke of Orleans lieutenant-general of the realm, although the king was an adult. The two parliaments of Paris and Pontoise, contesting the authority one with the other and issuing contradictory decrees, agreed in demanding

the expulsion of Mazarin — so much did the hatred of this minister seem the essential duty of every Frenchman. The court saw itself obliged once more to sacrifice Mazarin whom everyone believed the author of the troubles, but who was but their pretext. For a second time he left the country, and to increase his shame the king must needs make a public declaration dismissing his minister, the while praising his services and deploring his exile.

Charles I, king of England, who had just lost his head on the scaffold, had in the beginning of his troubles abandoned the blood of Strafford, his friend, to his parliament. Louis XIV on the contrary became the peaceful master of his realm by permitting his minister's exile. Thus the same weakness bore different results. The king of England, in abandoning his favourite, emboldened a people that breathed war and hated kings; and Louis XIV, or rather the queen-mother, by dismissing the cardinal, removed all pretext for revolt from a people tired of war and who loved royalty.



LOUIS XIV AS A YOUNG MAN

While the state was thus torn at home it had been attacked and weakened abroad; all the benefits of the battles of Rocroi, Lens, and Nördlingen were lost; the important place of Dunkirk was retaken by the Spaniards (September, 1652); they drove the French from Barcelona, they retook Casale in Italy (October, 1652).

Scarcely had the cardinal left for Bouillon, place of his new retreat, when the citizens of Paris, of their own accord, sent to the king and asked him to return to his capital. Louis entered Paris October 21st, 1652, and all was so peaceful that it would have been difficult to imagine that a few days before all was in confusion. Gaston of Orleans, unfortunate in his undertakings, which he never knew how to carry out, was relegated to Blois, where he passed the rest of his life in repentance; and he was the second son of Henry the Great to die without much glory. Cardinal de Retz, as imprudent as he was audacious, was arrested in the Louvre, and after having been sent from prison to prison long led a wandering life which he finished in retreat, where he acquired virtues which his great courage had not known in the agitations of his fortune.

Several councillors who had most abused their ministry paid for their actions with exile; the others withdrew into the limits of the magistracy and others attached themselves the closer to their duties with an annual gratuity of five hundred crowns which Fouquet, attorney-general and superintendent of the finances, gave them surreptitiously. The prince of Condé meanwhile, abandoned in France by nearly all his partisans, and badly assisted by the Spaniards, continued a disastrous war on the frontiers of Champagne. There still remained factions in Bordeaux, but they were soon pacified.

[1652-1653 A.D.]

Thus ended the Fronde. Voltaire dismisses it in a few pages, satisfied with recording its *bon mots*. He seems to have looked upon this civil war as merely a pastime, entered into by a few froward youths and their mistresses. He did not see in it the serious, the sanguinary and unhappy struggle of a nation for its liberty. Even later writers, more profound than Voltaire, have designated the Fronde as "the last campaign of the noblesse." It was indeed so. But the noblesse formed not the prominent body. It was the parliament, the magistracy, that put itself forward to represent the commons, of which they claimed and established the privileges for themselves. This was, no doubt, an audacious and hopeless enterprise. The states-general, the ancient representative assembly of the nation, was the form to which they should have rallied. But the extravagance of the English parliament deterred them; and they fixed upon their own body, as a less democratic and dangerous assembly, to participate in legislative power. The scheme was new: it was conceived with boldness, and supported with courage; and if the legists failed in arriving at settled liberty by its means, they may plead that representative assemblies have frequently failed in the same endeavour.*g*

MAZARIN AGAIN IN POWER (1653 A.D.)

The calm in the kingdom was the result of Cardinal Mazarin's banishment; however, scarcely had he been driven away by the general cry of the French people and the king's decree, when the king made him come back. He was astonished to see himself re-enter Paris all powerful. Louis XIV received him like a father and the people like a master. He held a great reception at the Hôtel-de-Ville amid the acclamations of the citizens; he threw money to the populace, but it is said that in his joy for so happy a change he showed his scorn for the inconstancy or rather the folly of the Parisians. The officers of parliament, after having placed a price on his head like a public robber, sued, almost all of them, for the honour of asking his protection; and this same parliament a short time after condemned by contumacy the prince of Condé to lose his life. They saw the cardinal, who urged this condemnation of Condé, marry to the prince of Conti his brother, one of his own nieces — a proof that the power of the minister was going to be boundless.

The king reunited the parliaments of Paris and of Pontoise; he forbade the assembling of the chambers. Parliament wished to remonstrate, one councillor was sent to prison; several others were exiled: parliament kept quiet; the change had already come.*i*

The events of Louis XIV's youth were such as to inspire him not only with high ideas of his kingly rights, but to prove to him the necessity of absolute power in the monarch.[1] In the great English rebellion, and in the Fronde, he had seen freedom under its most hideous aspect, and followed by the vainest of results. We can scarcely then blame him personally for his despotic propensities, which, moreover, his manly and ambitious character tended to increase. The young king and his brother Philip, then called the duke of Anjou, were educated in the privacy of the palace. The nieces of the cardinal were their playmates; and Louis formed successive attachments

[1 "Joan of Arc made France a nation against the English; Louis XIV made France a state against all Europe. The Fronde had none of these creative ideas — whence its incertitude and its weakness. Louis XIV had the idea of state — whence his firmness, his decision, and that famous phrase, '*L'État, c'est moi*,' which has been taken for an expression of pride but was an expression of policy."— SAINT-MARC GIRARDIN.]

for two of these young ladies, especially for Maria Mancini, afterwards the wife of the constable Colonna. So intimate was the connection betwixt Mazarin and Anne of Austria that many were persuaded of their marriage.[1] Certainly her attachment to him was personal and tender. Louis XIV always preserved for the cardinal a sort of filial reverence: he may be said to have learned in the school of implicit obedience how to be himself despotic.

At intervals, however, the imperious temper of the young monarch burst forth, and betrayed itself. In 1655, the parliament, after registering certain fiscal edicts, thought proper to re-examine them, to complain, and show symptoms of their ancient independence. Louis was at Vincennes, engaged in the chase, when he heard of their conduct. Instantly, without consulting the cardinal, or even tarrying to change his dress, the young monarch galloped to Paris, entered the Palais de Justice and the Hall of Parliament in his hunting habit, booted, and with whip in hand. "Gentlemen," said Louis to the astonished legists, "everyone is acquainted with the ill consequences of your former assemblies. Their recurrence must be prevented. I command you instantly to cease busying yourself with my edicts. And you, Mr. President, I forbid either to call or suffer such assemblies." This bold assertion of the royal will from the mouth of a stripling proved sufficient to crush the reviving spirit of the magistracy. It was silent, and obeyed.

WAR WITH SPAIN CONTINUES

Condé, who had become general in the Spanish armies, was unable to revive what he had himself weakened at Rocroi and Lens. He was fighting with raw troops against the veteran French regiments that had learned to conquer under him, and that were now commanded by Turenne. The fate of Turenne and of Condé was to be uniformly victorious when they were fighting together at the head of the French and to be defeated when they were commanding the Spanish.

Turenne had with difficulty saved the wreck of the Spanish army at Rethel when, instead of a general of the king of France, he had been made the lieutenant of a Spanish general; the prince of Condé had the same fate before Arras (August 25th, 1654). He and the archduke besieging this city, Turenne attacked them in their camp and forced their lines; the troops of the archduke were put to flight; Condé, with two regiments of French and Lorrainers, sustained alone the attack of Turenne's army; and, while the archduke was in flight, he defeated Marshal d'Hocquincourt, repulsed Marshal de la Ferté, and retired victorious, covering the retreat of the defeated Spaniards.

The relief of Arras, the forcing of the lines, and the rout of the archduke covered Turenne with glory; and it is to be observed that in the letter concerning this victory written in the name of the king to the parliament the success of the entire campaign is ascribed to Cardinal Mazarin and that Turenne's name is not even mentioned. The cardinal had been in fact a few leagues from Arras with the king. He had even been in the camp at the siege of Stenay, which Turenne had taken before relieving Arras. Councils of war had been held in the presence of the cardinal. On this basis he ascribed to himself the honour of the events; and this vanity brought upon him a ridicule that all the authority of his ministry could not suppress. The

[1 See note, page 488.]

king was not present at the battle of Arras. He had gone into the trenches at the siege of Stenay, but Cardinal Mazarin was unwilling that he should further expose his person, upon which the tranquillity of the state and the power of the minister seemed to depend.

Thus on the one side, Mazarin, absolute master of France and of the young king, and on the other, Don Luis de Haro, who governed Spain and Philip IV, continued in the name of their masters to carry on the war, but with little vigour.

These two men vied with each other in directing their policies towards forming an alliance with Cromwell, the English Protector, who for some time enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing himself courted by the two most powerful kingdoms of Christendom. The Spanish minister offered to help him take Calais; Mazarin proposed to besiege Dunkirk and restore that city to him. Cromwell had to choose between the key of France and that of Flanders. He was also much solicited by Condé, but he did not wish to negotiate with a prince who had nothing left but his name and who was without a party in France and without power in Spain.

ALLIANCE WITH CROMWELL (1655 A.D.); WAR IN FLANDERS (1656–1658 A.D.)

In May, 1655, the Protector decided in favour of France, but without making any special treaty or a division of conquests in advance. He wished to shed lustre on his usurpation by greater enterprises. His design was to wrest Mexico from the Spaniards, but the latter were warned in time. Cromwell's admirals, however, took Jamaica from them. It was not until after the Jamaican expedition that Cromwell signed his treaty with the king of France, but without making any mention of Dunkirk. The Protector treated as equal with equal; he forced the king to give him the title of brother in his letters. In the copy of the treaty that remained in England his secretary signed before the French ambassador; but he negotiated really as a superior by forcing the king to drive out of his dominions Charles II and the duke of York, the grandsons of Henry IV, to whom France owed an asylum. A greater sacrifice of honour to fortune could not have been made.

While Mazarin was making this treaty Charles II asked for one of his nieces in marriage. The bad condition of his affairs that drove the prince to this step also brought upon him a refusal. It has even been suspected that the cardinal wished to marry to the son of Cromwell the niece whom he refused to the king of England. This much is certain — that when he afterwards saw the way to the throne more open to Charles II he wished to renew this marriage; but was refused in his turn.

The war continued in Flanders with varying success. Turenne, having besieged Valenciennes along with Marshal de la Ferté, suffered the same kind of reverse that Condé had sustained at Arras. The prince, assisted this time by Don John of Austria, who was more worthy to fight at his side than the archduke had been, forced La Ferté's lines, took him prisoner, and relieved Valenciennes (July 17th, 1656). Turenne did what Condé had done in a similar rout. He saved the defeated army and opposed the enemy everywhere; a little later he even besieged and took the little town of La Capelle (September 27th). This was perhaps the first time that a defeated army had dared to make a siege.

This famous march of Turenne, which was followed by the taking of La Capelle, was eclipsed by an even finer march of the prince of Condé.

Turenne had laid siege to Cambray when Condé, at the head of two thousand cavalry, forced a passage through the besieging army, and having driven back all who tried to stop him threw himself into the town (May 31st, 1657). The citizens received their deliverer on bended knees. Thus these two men, opposed to each other, exhibited the resources of their genius. We admire them in their retreats as well as in their victories, in their good conduct and even in their faults, which they were always able to retrieve. Their talents alternately arrested the progress of each monarchy; but the financial disorder in Spain and in France was a still greater obstacle to their success.

The alliance with Cromwell finally gave France a more marked superiority. On the one hand, Admiral Blake was about to burn the Spanish galleons and cause the loss of the sole treasure with which the war could be maintained. On the other hand, twenty English vessels had just blockaded the port of Dunkirk and six thousand veterans of the English Revolution reinforced Turenne's army. Then Dunkirk, the most important place in Flanders, was besieged by sea and land. Condé and Don John of Austria, having united all their forces, came forward to relieve it. The eyes of Europe were upon this event. Cardinal Mazarin brought Louis XIV near the scene of war without allowing him to get to it, although he was nearly twenty years old. The prince stopped at Calais, and hither Cromwell sent to him a pompous embassy, at the head of which was his son-in-law, Lord Falconberg. The king sent to him the duke de Créqui, and Mancini, duke de Nevers, a nephew of the cardinal, followed by two hundred noblemen. Mancini presented the Protector a remarkable letter from Cardinal Mazarin in which he said that he was sorry not to be able to pay him in person the respect due to the greatest man in the world.

Meanwhile the prince-marshal Turenne attacked the Spanish army, or rather the army of Flanders, near the Dunes. The latter was commanded by Don John of Austria, son of Philip IV and an actress, who two years later became the brother-in-law of Louis XIV. The prince of Condé was with this army but not in command; hence it was not difficult for Turenne to gain the victory (June 14th, 1658). The six thousand English soldiers contributed to the victory, which was complete.

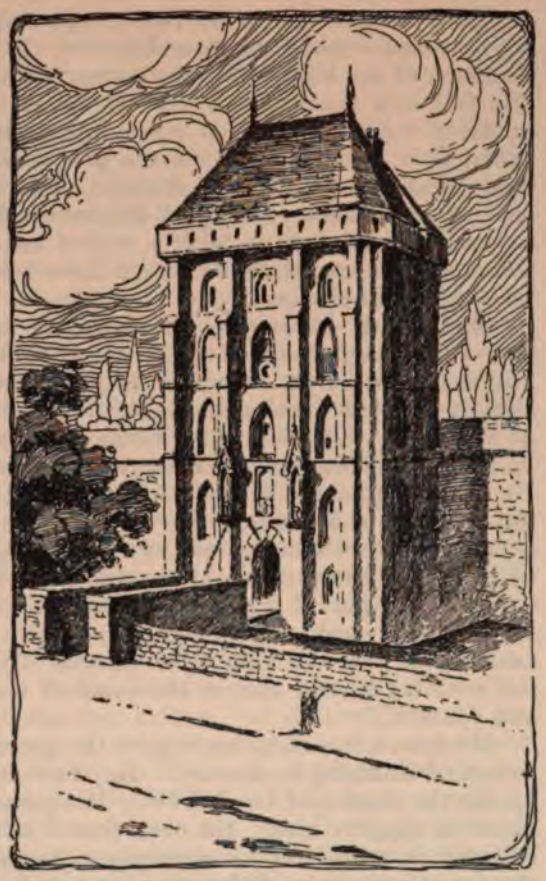
The genius of the Great Condé was of no avail against the best troops of France and England. The Spanish army was destroyed. Dunkirk surrendered soon afterwards (June 23rd). The king came up with his minister in order to see the garrison pass out. The cardinal did not allow Louis XIV to appear either as warrior or as king. He had no money to distribute to the soldiers, and was poorly attended. When he was with the army he dined with Mazarin or with Marshal Turenne. This neglect of royal dignity was not in Louis XIV the effect of contempt for pomp, but of the confusion in his affairs and of the pains the cardinal took to unite splendour and authority in himself. Louis entered Dunkirk only to turn it over to Cromwell's ambassador, Lord Lockhart. Mazarin tried whether by finesse he could not evade the treaty and not give up the place; but Lockhart threatened, and English firmness got the better of Italian subtlety.

Several persons have asserted that the cardinal, who had attributed to himself the victory of Arras, tried to induce Turenne to yield to him again the honour of the battle of Dunes. Du Bec-Crépin, count de Moret, it is said, came on behalf of the minister and proposed to the general to write a letter in which it would appear that the cardinal had himself arranged the entire plan of operation. Turenne received these hints with contempt and would

[1658 A.D.]

not make a statement that would have brought disgrace upon a general of the army and ridicule upon a man of the church. Mazarin, who had been so foolish, now had the misfortune of remaining on ill terms with Turenne until his death.

In the midst of this first triumph the king fell ill at Calais and for several days was near death. Immediately all the courtiers turned towards his brother, Monsieur. Mazarin lavished deference and flattery upon Marshal du Plessis-Praslin, the former tutor of this young prince, and upon count de Guiche, his favourite. A cabal was formed in Paris that was bold enough to write to Calais against the cardinal. He made preparations to leave the kingdom and to conceal his immense riches. An empiric of Abbeville cured the king with emetic wine that the court physicians called poison. This good man seated himself upon the king's bed and said, "This is a very sick boy, but he is not going to die." When the king became convalescent the cardinal banished all who had intrigued against him.



ENTRANCE GATE TO THE CHÂTEAU DE VINCENNES

A few months later Cromwell died (September 13th, 1658) at the age of fifty-five, in the midst of his projects for the strengthening of his power and the glory of his nation. Richard Cromwell succeeded peaceably and without opposition to the protectorate of his father, as a prince of Wales would have succeeded a king of England. The emperor Ferdinand III had died in 1657. His son Leopold, who was seventeen years old and already king of Hungary and Bohemia, had not been elected king of the Romans during the life-time of his father. Mazarin wished to attempt to make Louis XIV emperor. This was a chimerical idea; it would have been necessary either to coerce or to bribe the electors. France was neither strong enough to seize the empire nor rich enough to buy it; so the first overtures made at Frankfort by Marshal de Grammont and by Lionne were abandoned almost as soon as they were proposed. Leopold was elected. All that Mazarin's politics accomplished was to form an alliance, known as the League of the Rhine, with certain German princes,[1] to observe the Treaty of Westphalia, and to furnish a check to the authority of the emperor over the empire (August, 1658).

[1 The three ecclesiastical electors, the duke of Bavaria, the princes of Brunswick and of Hesse, the kings of Sweden and Denmark.]

France, after the battle of the Dunes, was powerful in her foreign relations through her glory and her arms as well as through the condition to which the other nations were reduced. But the country itself was suffering; it was stripped of money, and there was need of peace.

THE TREATY OF THE PYRENEES (1659 A.D.)

The cardinal had to do two things in order to bring his ministry to a happy close — make peace and insure the tranquillity of the state by the marriage of the king. The intrigues during the latter's illness made Mazarin feel how necessary an heir to the throne was to the splendour of the minister. All these considerations determined him to marry Louis XIV promptly. Two princesses were proposed — the daughter of the king of Spain and the princess of Savoy. The king's heart had made another choice: he was desperately in love with Mademoiselle Mancini, one of the cardinal's nieces. Born with a tender heart and a firm will, full of passion and without experience, he would have been capable of resolving to marry the lady of his choice.

Madame de Motteville, the favourite of the queen-mother, whose *Mémoires* have a great air of truth, claims that Mazarin was tempted to let the king's love have its way and to place his niece on the throne. He had already married another niece to the prince de Conti, and one to the duke de Mercœur. The one whom Louis XIV loved had been asked in marriage by the king of England. These were titles enough to justify his ambitions. He adroitly sounded the queen-mother. "I fear," he said, "that the king has too great a desire to marry my niece." The queen, who knew the minister, understood that he desired what he feigned to fear. She replied to him with all the haughtiness of a princess of the blood of Austria, daughter, wife, and mother of kings, and with the bitterness which she had felt for some time towards a minister who affected to be independent of her. She said to him, "If the king were capable of this indignity I would place myself with my second son at the head of the whole nation against the king and yourself."

Mazarin, it is said, never forgave the queen this reply; but he took the wiser course of thinking as she did. He made it a point of honour and merit to oppose the passion of Louis XIV. His power did not need a queen of his own blood to support him. He even feared the character of his niece; and he believed he would further strengthen the power of his ministry by avoiding the dangerous glory of elevating his own house too high.

In the year 1656 he had sent Lionne to Spain to negotiate peace and to ask the hand of the infanta; but Don Luis de Haro, convinced that, feeble as Spain was, France was not less so, rejected the cardinal's offer. The infanta, daughter of Philip IV by his first wife, was intended for the young Leopold. By his second marriage Philip had at that time only a son whose sickly infancy caused fears for his life. It was desired that the infanta, who might be the heir to many states, should transfer her rights to the house of Austria and not to a hostile dynasty; but finally, Philip IV having had another son, Don Philip Prosper, and his wife being again *enceinte*, the danger involved in giving the infanta to the king of France seemed to him less great, and the battle of the Dunes made peace necessary to him.

The Spaniards promised the infanta and asked for a suspension of hostilities (1659). Mazarin and Don Luis de Haro repaired to the isle of Pheasants on the frontier of France and Spain. Although general peace and the

[1659 A.D.]

marriage of the king of France were the objects of their conference, more than a month passed in regulating ceremonies and settling difficulties of precedence. The cardinals called themselves the equals of the kings and the superiors of other sovereigns. France, with greater justice, claimed pre-eminence over the other powers. Don Luis de Haro, however, assumed perfect equality between France and Spain.

The conferences lasted four months. Mazarin and Don Luis employed all the resources of their respective policies; that of the cardinal was strategy, that of Don Luis delay. The latter never gave promises: the former only equivocal ones. The genius of the Italian was to try to surprise; that of the Spaniard, to keep from being surprised.

Such are the vicissitudes of human affairs that of this famous Peace of the Pyrenees, signed November 7th, 1659, not two articles have endured. The king of France retained Roussillon which he would have kept anyway, without this peace, also Artois and Cerdagne; but the Spanish monarchy has no more possessions in Flanders.

But if Don Luis de Haro said that Cardinal Mazarin could deceive, it has been said since that he could foresee. He long meditated the alliance of the houses of France and Spain. This famous letter of his, written during the negotiations at Münster, is cited: "If the most Christian king could have the Netherlands and Franche-Comté as dower upon espousing the infanta, then we might aspire to the Spanish succession, whatever we might have to relinquish to the infanta; and it would not be a very long wait, since there is only the life of the prince her brother that could exclude her from it." This prince was Balthazar, who died in 1649.

The cardinal was evidently deceived in thinking that the Netherlands and Franche-Comté could be given to the infanta as her marriage portion. Not a single city was stipulated for her dower. On the other hand, important cities that had been conquered, like St. Omer, Ypres, Menin, Oudenarde, and other places, were restored to the Spanish monarchy. Some were retained. The cardinal was not mistaken in believing that this relinquishment would be useless some day. But those who gave him the honour of this prediction make him also foresee that Prince Don Balthazar would die in 1649; that later the three children of the second marriage would be cut off in the cradle; that Charles, the fifth of the male children, would die without issue; and that this Austrian king would one day make a will in favour of a grandson of Louis XIV. But at any rate Cardinal Mazarin foresaw what value this relinquishment would have in case the male line of Philip should become extinct: and after more than fifty years strange events justified him.

Maria Theresa, the infanta, able to have as dower the cities that France restored, brought by her marriage contract nothing else than 500,000 gold crowns; it cost the king more than that to go to receive her at the frontier. These 500,000 crowns, equivalent to 2,500,000 livres, were the subject of a great deal of dispute between the two ministers. In the end France never received but 100,000 francs. Instead of this marriage bringing any other real and immediate advantage than that of peace, the infanta renounced all rights she might ever have to any of her father's lands. Louis XIV ratified this renunciation in the most solemn manner.[1]

[1 It has been suggested that Mazarin purposely made the dowry such as Spain could not well pay, so that the treaty must be broken. That clause once broken, the renunciation of the succession was also void, with the rest of the treaty. If such was really Mazarin's plan, it was an extraordinary one.]

The duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, against whom France and Spain had much cause to complain, or rather who had much to complain of against them, was included in the treaty; but only as an unfortunate prince who was punished, because he could not make himself feared. France restored his states to him, demolishing Nancy, however, and forbade him to maintain troops. Don Luis de Haro forced Cardinal Mazarin to receive Condé into favour again, by threatening to leave in the sovereignty of the prince Rocroi, Le Catelet, and other places of which he was in possession. So France gained both these towns and the Great Condé. He lost his dignity of grand-master of the royal household, which was afterwards given to his son, and returned with scarcely anything but his glory.

Finally (August, 1660) Cardinal Mazarin brought the king with his new queen to Paris.[1] Mazarin acted exactly like a father who would marry his son without giving him charge of his own property. He returned more powerful and more jealous of his power, and even of honours, than ever. He required parliament to address him through deputies. This was something unparalleled in the monarchy, but it was not too great a reparation for the wrong that parliament had done him. He no longer gave his hand to the princes of the blood as formerly. He who had treated Don Luis de Haro as an equal tried to treat the Great Condé as an inferior. He went about with royal pomp, having besides his guards a company of musketeers, which was ever afterwards the second company of king's musketeers. There was no more freedom of access to him. If anyone was a poor enough courtier to ask a favour of the king, he was lost. The queen-mother, so long the stubborn protectress of Mazarin against France, was without credit as soon as he had no more need of her. Her son, the king, brought up in blind submission to this minister, could not shake off the yoke that she had imposed upon him as well as upon herself; Louis XIV could not reign during the lifetime of Mazarin.

LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF MAZARIN (1659-1661 A.D.)

A minister is excusable for the evil he does when the helm of state is forced into his hands by tempests; but during a calm he is answerable for the good that he fails to do. Mazarin did good only to himself and his family. Eight years of absolute and undisturbed power, from his final return until his death, were marked by no glorious or useful establishment; for the college of the Four Nations was only created by his will.[2]

He controlled the finances like the steward of a lord involved in debt. The king sometimes asked money of Fouquet, who replied, "Sire, there is nothing in your majesty's coffers, but the cardinal will lend you some." Mazarin was worth about two hundred millions, reckoning in the money values of to-day (*i.e.*, the middle of the eighteenth century). Several memoirs say that he amassed part of it by means far beneath the grandeur of his position. They relate that he shared with privateer captains the profits of their voyages. This has never been proved; but the Dutch suspected him of it, and they never would have suspected Cardinal Richelieu.

[1 The marriage had taken place in June, 1660, at Fuenterrabia in the Pyrenees.]

[2 We may add that he pensioned several writers — among them Descartes and the historian Mézeray — and that he provided for the splendid Mazarin library, opened later to the public. "Mazarin," says Duruy, "had the liveliest if not the best taste for art. He brought from Italy a number of paintings, statues, and curiosities — even actors and machinists who introduced the opera into France. In 1655 he founded the Academy of Painting and Sculpture."]

[1661 A.D.]

In high spirits was Mazarin at the moment of signing the great treaty at Bidassoa (Treaty of the Pyrenees). He wrote to Paris: "All will soon be over. I shall not stay long in the Basque country, unless I find amusement in watching them hunt whales, in learning their language and their dances."

However, the dancer was soon smitten by gout. His lungs became affected. The bed of the moribund, covered with cards, was a gaming table over which offices were sold. Cards and the sacrament went pell-mell.[b] It is said that on his death-bed he felt remorse, but outwardly he displayed courage. At least, he feared for his property, and he made the king a complete donation of it believing that the king would return it to him. He was not mistaken; the king returned the gift in three days. Finally he died at Vincennes, March 9th, 1661, and no one but the king seemed to mourn him, for this prince already knew how to dissemble. The yoke was beginning to weigh heavily upon him; he was impatient to reign. Nevertheless he wished to seem affected by a death that put him in possession of his throne. Louis XIV and the court wore mourning for Cardinal Mazarin, an unusual honour, and one which Henry IV had paid to the memory of Gabrielle d'Estrées.

We will not undertake [says Voltaire] to decide whether Mazarin was a great minister or not; his actions must speak for themselves. There is often a popular idea of a vast breadth of mind and an almost divine genius in those who have governed empires with some success. It is not a superior power of penetration that makes statesmen; it is their character. Men, if they have ever so little good sense, nearly all perceive their own interests. In this respect a citizen of Amsterdam or of Bern is as wise as Sejanus, Ximenes, Buckingham, Richelieu, or Mazarin; but our conduct and our enterprises depend solely upon the temper of our soul, and our successes depend upon fortune. For example, if such a genius as Pope Alexander VI or his son Borgia had had to take La Rochelle, he would have invited the principal leaders to his camp under a solemn oath and would have made away with them. Mazarin would have entered the city two or three years later by winning over and dividing the citizens. Don Luis de Haro would not have risked the enterprise. Richelieu built a dyke along the sea, after the example of Alexander, entered and took La Rochelle; but a less strong tide or a little greater promptness on the part of the English would have saved La Rochelle and made Richelieu seem foolhardy.

The character of men can be judged by their enterprises. It may well be said that the soul of Richelieu breathed pride and vengeance, that Mazarin was wise, pliant, and avaricious. But in order to tell in how far a minister has genius one must either have frequently heard him talk, or one must read what he has written. What is seen every day among courtiers often happens among statesmen: he who has most genius fails, while he who has in his character more of patience, force, pliancy, and persistence succeeds. On reading the letters of Cardinal Mazarin and the *Mémoires* of Cardinal de Retz[j] one easily sees that De Retz was the superior genius. Nevertheless Mazarin was all-powerful and De Retz was overthrown. Finally, it is quite true that to make a powerful minister often nothing is needed but a mediocre mind, good sense, and luck; but to be a good minister a man must have love for the public welfare as his dominant passion. The great statesman is he who leaves to his country great and useful memorials.

The memorial that immortalises Cardinal Mazarin is the acquisition of Alsace. He gave this province to France at a time when France was

enraged at him; and by a singular fatality he did more good for the kingdom when he was persecuted than in the tranquillity of absolute power.[a]

Mazarin's end [says Michelet] was at least consistent with his life — he lived and died a cheat. He believed he had cheated the future. Fortunate player, he had all his plans well laid. The prophecies of his youth were fulfilled. He had appeared, at the age of twenty-five, upon a field of battle crying, "Peace! Peace!" From the noble and serious workers who had died painfully in preparing his opportunities, he filched the glory of the triumphant Peace of Westphalia and that of the Pyrenees. Richelieu sowed, Mazarin harvested. The one created the administration, the army, the navy, and died on the eve of Rocroi. The other spoiled everything and succeeded in everything. Great through the greatness of Condé, and greater through that of Turenne, his position was strengthened by even the futile tempest of the Fronde; he retains at least the honour of that forced and fatal peace into which France fell through sheer lassitude. This pedestal is still left him; his features even after death wear the mask of the Angel of Peace.

Was it really peace? Too late it had arrived: Germany, agonising in ruin, found no peace in the Treaty of Westphalia; Spain, dead and done with, was in no condition to reap benefit from the Peace of the Pyrenees. And France herself, entering by this door into a fifty years' struggle for the Spanish succession, was to find in this peace fiscal war at home and bloody strife abroad.[b]





CHAPTER XIX

"L'ÉTAT, C'EST MOI"

[1661–1715 A.D.]

The two foundations of the absolute throne of Louis XIV were terror and admiration: the terror of a power which had subjugated the army, the church, the magistracy, the noblesse, and the municipalities; the admiration of a power to which literature and art, arms and fortune, rendered their richest and their uninterrupted tribute. King-worship had never before taken so entire a possession of any Christian state. Never had the luxurious pomp of an Oriental court been so intimately and so long associated with the energies, the refined tastes, and the intellectual culture of an European sovereignty. During fifty successive years, Louis continued to be the greatest actor on the noblest stage, and in the presence of the most enthusiastic audience, of the world.

—STEPHEN. *p*

NEVER had there been at any court more intrigues and hopes than during the last hours of Cardinal Mazarin. Women who had any pretence to beauty were flattering themselves that they would now govern a twenty-two-year-old prince whom love had already so far seduced as to make him offer his crown to his mistress. The young courtiers had hopes that the reign of the favourites would return; each minister was expecting the first place; none of them thought that a king who had been so excluded from affairs would dare take upon himself the burden of government. Mazarin had prolonged the king's childhood as far as he could; and only for a short time had been giving him instructions, and that because the king had demanded it. So far were they from expecting to be governed by their sovereign, that of all those who had hitherto worked with the prime minister there was none who asked the king when he wished an audience. One and all asked, "To whom shall we now address ourselves?"—and Louis XIV replied, "To me." *b*

The secretary of state for war, Michel le Tellier, hastened with the astounding piece of news to the queen-mother, who laughed in his face: "In good faith, M. le Tellier, what do you think of it?" This resolution, however, was nothing but the accomplishment of the advice twenty times

given by Mazarin, and if there was any cause for astonishment it was not that the king took the advice but that he held to it; he was, as La Bruyère says, "his own prime minister and exacted of the chief state functionaries that they deal directly with him." For thirty years he worked regularly eight hours a day. He relates in his *Mémoires*,[f] with legitimate pride, the effect produced by the announcement of his assumption of authority, and he recommends his son in a few truly eloquent words "not to forget that it is by work one reigns; to rule without working is to be ungrateful and defiant towards God, unjust and tyrannical towards man."

But what is still more remarkable is that the young prince who so boldly assumed the power had already mapped out his policy. Not only did Louis XIV rule with the boundless power of some of his predecessors, but he was the first to establish in France the theory of an absolute monarchy. In his eyes royalty was a divine institution. Sovereigns were the representatives of God upon earth — his inspired lieutenants; and on this account participators, in a fashion, in his power and infallibility. And as royalty, in making itself absolute, had kept to the old principle of feudal law, that sovereignty and property are the same thing, Louis not only believed himself master of his subjects, but the owner of their possessions — a monstrous doctrine which carries us back to oriental monarchies. At all events it did not seem to him that authority to which he recognised no limits but those imposed by conscience and by religion, ought to remain sterile. He wished it active and hard working; he believed that kings had imperious duties to fulfil. It was thus that Louis XIV understood his royal profession.[c] Nor can it be denied that he carried out to a large extent in practice the theory of royalty that he professed. He was destined to reign for fifty-four years after the death of Mazarin; his reign in its entirety being one of the longest in history. After Mazarin he had no minister whom he did not dominate: he was king in fact as well as in name. He came to be by far the most famous monarch of his time. His court at Versailles set a standard of magnificence which other monarchs of that and succeeding ages strove to imitate without hoping to rival.

In his political relations with his subjects, as has been said, Louis came to represent the culmination of that autocratic system which for generations had been almost steadily advancing in France, — a system which had known such exponents as Louis XI, Francis I, and Henry IV; and which Sully, Richelieu, and Mazarin had done so much to fortify. Nor did he confine his theory to his own subjects. He came finally to feel almost the same proprietary right in the affairs of Europe and he attempted with the aid of his armies to dictate to foreign nations somewhat as he dictated within the bounds of his own territory. And, having the good fortune to be served by two great soldiers, Condé and Turenne, he was enabled, notwithstanding his own rather meagre military talents, to carry out the idea here also with some measure of success. It was a qualified success, to be sure, for he did not secure the control of Holland at which he aimed; he did not very greatly extend the boundaries of France; and if his grandson was left finally in possession of the Spanish throne, this was a victory tempered with the concession that the thrones of Spain and France should never be consolidated. Nevertheless, to have embroiled all Europe in war after war; to have been the central figure of a long epoch; to have given his name to an important period of history; to have placed that name in the small list of those rulers to whom posterity concedes the title "Great," — this surely is to have played the part of king right royally.

[1661–1715 A.D.]

This reign, then, is a curiously full and vital one. We shall best understand it perhaps if we study it first from within, witnessing the activities of the great monarch in his relations with his own people before turning (in subsequent chapters) to the foreign relations of the kingdom. As preliminary to this study of the economic and social development of France during the long reign of Louis XIV, we must take a glance at the interesting figure of the monarch himself. In the first place it must be remembered that this remarkable man had a remarkable heritage. He numbered among his direct ancestors not far removed such remarkable characters as Henry IV of France, the German emperor Charles V, and the Spanish sovereigns Ferdinand and Isabella. This in itself suggests a strange mixture of races in his ancestry. But further examination of his ancestral tree reveals even more striking facts. It appears that this greatest of French kings is, so far as his ancestral blood is concerned, almost as much Spaniard or Italian as he is French; and quite as much German. His father was born in France, his mother in Spain; of his four grandparents one was born in France, one in Spain, one in Italy, one in Germany. Of his thirty ancestors within four generations only eight were born in France while ten were born in Germany or in the yet farther outlying regions of Hungary and Bohemia; the remainder of the company being distributed between Spain (and Portugal) and Italy. The subtended table[1] showing details of the ancestry of Louis XIV for four generations will make these facts clear at a glance. It is

[1] Table of the direct ancestors of Louis XIV for four generations, showing birthplace of each ancestor. It will be noted that Ferdinand I and Anna of Hungary appear twice in the fourth generation column. The actual number of persons, therefore, is twenty-eight instead of thirty.[a]

	FIRST GENERATION	SECOND GENERATION	THIRD GENERATION	FOURTH GENERATION	
Louis XIV France 1638–1715	Louis XIII France	Henry IV France	Anthony de Bourbon France	Charles, d. of Vendôme	France
				Françoise d'Alençon	France
			Jeanne d'Albret France	Henry II, K. of Navarre	France
				Marguerite d'Angoulême	France
		Marie d' Medici Italy	Francesco I, Grand D. of Tuscany Italy	Cosmo I, G. D. of Tuscany	Italy
				Leonora of Toledo	Spain
			Joanna Arch., D. Austria	Emp. Ferdinand I	Spain
				Anna of Hungary	Hungary
	Anne of Austria Spain	Philip III Spain	Philip II Spain	Charles V	Spanish Netherlands
				Isabella	Portugal
			Anne of Austria Austria	Maximilian II	Austria
				Maria (d. Emp. Ch. VI)	Spain
		Margaret Austria	Charles, D. Styria Austria	*Emp. Ferdinand I*	*Spain*
				Anna of Hungary	*Hungary*
			Maria of Bavaria Bavaria	Albrecht V	Bavaria
				Anne (d. Emp. Ferdinand I)	Austria

worthy of careful study as illustrating in detail the heterogeneity of ethnic elements that went to build up the personality of this cosmopolite. Persons fond of generalising as to national characteristics will perhaps feel that the more conspicuous traits of Louis' personality are not difficult to account for in the light of his conglomerate ancestry.

Leaving such speculations, however, to whoever may choose to make them, let us turn from the ancestry of the king to the king himself. "He had," says Kitchin,[q] "all the qualities which strike the eye: and was, as Bolingbroke acutely remarked, 'if not the greatest king, the best actor of majesty at least that ever filled a throne'; as a king should be, he was courteous, dignified, calm, and 'debonair,' firm in act and speech, and constant: he had a great sense of duty and propriety; and said himself that a king should act according to the dictates of good sense; he cultivated that habitual discretion and seriousness of manner which often cloak ignorance or want of capacity. He spoke but little, that little, however, was to the point; he was reserved, was thought rather stingy, did not often laugh. These characteristics were backed by one marked quality, strength of will, which could be obstinacy: and were all made subservient to one persistent passion, the inordinate desire of reputation and glory." Yet Kitchin sees in Louis, on the whole, a "second-rate man," distinctly inferior in many ways to his grandfather, Henry IV. Thus he declares that "In no branch of his life's work does Louis show one spark of originality; even Voltaire confesses that there was 'more uprightness and dignity than spring' in him: he had no boldness and no enthusiasm: 'he made war without being a warrior,' decreed many laws, but had not the slightest idea of legislation; he busied himself with administration, but had no real organising gifts. He had that sure mark which distinguishes the second-rate man from the great man: he loved details for their own sake; he shrank instinctively from all that was noble and strong; and chose the inferior agent in preference to the better."

It seems almost paradoxical to pronounce such a judgment as this upon a monarch of such celebrity. Yet perhaps the judgment is not far from just. Louis XIV had the good fortune to follow Henry IV and Richelieu and Mazarin; the later years of his reign, in which he was in effect gathering the harvest of his own sowing, are far less notable than are the earlier ones during which he profited by the labours of his forerunners. Yet after all allowances are made for Louis' shortcomings and for his mistakes, it seems futile to deny that the famous monarch who for the space of almost three average generations dominated the European situation had at least some of the elements of greatness.

With this introduction to the personality of Louis XIV, we are now prepared to take up in detail the affairs of his government. First of all, as has been said, we shall consider those measures through which the internal prosperity of France was furthered during the early years of the reign. In so doing we shall have occasion to see something of the ministers who aided Louis in this work. There are no more Richelieus and Mazarins; yet in Colbert we have a man not altogether unworthy to wear the mantle of these great predecessors; nor are Le Tellier, Lionne, and Fouquet by any means despicable.[a]

THE MINISTERS

The *clercs au secret* who, in 1547, became ministers of state were four in number; each of them administered not only certain affairs, but all the affairs of certain provinces. They formed an impracticable organisation.

[1661 A.D.]

The religious wars, the troubles of Louis XIII's minority, prevented any change.[1]

In 1619 a single member of the ministry was charged with the conduct of war and with the correspondence with the *chefs de corps;* another in 1626 had the foreign affairs. Finally under Louis XIV the ministry of the king's household was established for ecclesiastical affairs and those of the navy. Important posts, raised to offices, that is to say, making their holders irremovable — such as the chancellor-keeper of the seals, chief of the magistracy, and controller-general of the finances — were like two other ministries. The special functions allotted to each of the four secretaries of state did not prevent them from keeping, for other affairs, the old-time division by provinces which existed until the Revolution.

The ministers whom Mazarin had left behind him were Pierre Séguier, chancellor and keeper of the seals, a sort of irremovable minister who was clever enough, by assuming no political importance, to make himself regarded as necessary for fifty years; Michel le Tellier, secretary of state for war, Hugues de Lionne who had charge of the marine (the portfolio of which he kept till 1669) and of foreign affairs; and Nicholas Fouquet, the superintendent of finance. The first two were distinguished men, the third a superior man; as for the fourth, Fouquet, by his encouragement of letters, he had acquired the reputation of a generous Mæcenas, and he counted illustrious persons among his friends — Pellisson, La Fontaine, Gourville, Madame de Sévigné and Mademoiselle de Scudéry, who have pleaded his cause before posterity without gaining it. He had put, or rather left, the finances in extreme disorder and he himself drew without scruple on the treasury. He was increasing the king's expenses and diminishing the receipts; finally, what was still more serious, he seemed to seek supporters everywhere, even amongst the great nobles, and he fortified the places of which he held command as though to prepare for himself, in case of disgrace, an impregnable retreat. He was almost a frondeur; he was certainly a knave. Less was needed for Louis to strike him.

The king had a secret minister who every evening called his attention to the errors and falsehoods of the superintendent. This was Jean-Baptiste Colbert, born at Rheims in 1619 of an ancient family of tradesmen and magistrates. He had been intendant to Mazarin, who before he died had said to the king: "Sire, I owe you everything; but I think I am to some extent discharging my debt when I give you Colbert."[c]

This working together in secret was the cause of the catastrophe of Fouquet, in which were involved many others. The fall of this minister, who is much less to be reproached than is Cardinal Mazarin, teaches us that it is not the privilege of everybody to commit the same faults.[b]

The precaution of disarming Fouquet was made in advance. His post of general prosecutor assured him the privilege of being judged by parliament;

[1] There were in Louis XIV's day three councils: (1) The supreme council, to which the king summoned the secretaries of state and sometimes the princes of the blood. It had the general direction of the governmental policy and important affairs. It judged appeals from the state council. (2) The state council, placed beneath the ministry but above the higher courts. It was the great administrative body of the realm, meeting four times a week, the chancellor presiding. On one day it read and discussed the reports of the provincial governors; on another it discussed financial questions; on another it listened to complaints on taxation; on another it adjudged differences between the courts. The state councillors were eighteen in number. (3) The grand council, which occupied itself with cases covering the bishoprics and the benefices at the king's disposal. It judged the edicts of the sovereign courts and the conflicts between the parliament and the lower courts. Its decisions were executive throughout the whole kingdom, while the sentences of each parliament applied only to its own territory.

and the king put no trust, and for reason, in the justice of parliament. Fouquet therefore was skilfully inveigled into selling his post. It is said that he discarded his robe of office in the hope of obtaining the *cordon bleu*, which the king did not wish any longer to give to persons connected with justice. Moreover, he was counting on becoming chancellor on the death of the aged Séguier. Of the 1,400,000 francs, the price of his office, he offered one million as a pure gift to the king, who had expressed to him a desire for ready money. He thus prepared the instruments of his own ruin. It was feared that at the moment of his arrest his friends would attempt to get him to Belle-Île and to agitate Brittany and Normandy where many malcontents were under cover. A journey to Brittany was planned for the coming month of September, under pretence of holding the provincial estate at Nantes and of obtaining a greater gratuitous gift through the presence of the king.[a]

Fouquet's undoing was thus already resolved upon when the king accepted the magnificent fête which the minister arranged for him at his house at Vaux for August 17th, 1661. The palace and its gardens had cost him about eighteen millions.[1] He had built the mansion twice over and bought three hamlets whose area was included in the enormous gardens, then considered the most beautiful in all Europe. The fountains of Vaux, since relegated to mediocrity by those of Versailles, Marly, and St. Cloud, were marvels in their day. But however magnificent the place, its enormous cost proves that he had been served with as little economy as he himself served the king. It was also true that St. Germain and Fontainebleau, the only pleasure places used by the king, could not compare in beauty with Vaux. Louis XIV felt this and it irritated him. All over the mansion were to be seen the arms and motto of Fouquet — a squirrel with these words, *Quo non ascendam?* (To what point shall I not mount?)

The king interpreted the device for himself; the ambition of the motto did not serve to appease the monarch. The courtiers remarked that the squirrel was everywhere painted pursued by a snake which was the arms of Colbert. The fête was far beyond those which Mazarin had given, not only in magnificence but in taste. The *Facheux* of Molière was presented for the first time: Pellisson had written the prologue, which was much admired.[b]

The king said to the queen-mother in anger, "Ah, madame, shall we not make this fellow disgorge his prey?" And he was tempted to have the minister arrested on the spot; however, he restrained himself.[c]

On the 5th of September, during the prearranged sojourn of the court of Nantes, D'Artagnan, captain of the musketeers, laid hands on Fouquet as he was leaving the cabinet of the king, put him into a coach and conducted him under a strong escort to the château of Angers. He had the greatest difficulty in protecting the superintendent during the journey from the fury of the people. All his houses were sealed and his property was seized. Among the latter were found directions as to what his friends should do in case he was arrested. The plan, like those that Cardinal de Retz had made several times, consisted in procuring for him places, money, and presses by means of which France could be inundated with pamphlets. Fouquet was transferred without delay to Vincennes and brought before a chamber of justice.[e]

He was accused of wasting the revenues, which was only too true, and of plotting against the safety of the state, which was never proved. At the end of three years nine judges gave their voices for death, thirteen others

[1 Voltaire is wrong here, says Martin: [d] "Fouquet had spent about nine millions" (almost eighteen nowadays and perhaps forty-five in relative value).]

[1661 A.D.]

for banishment. The king, aggravating the penalty, changed it into perpetual imprisonment and Fouquet was incarcerated in the citadel of Pinerolo, where he died after nineteen years of captivity (March 23, 1680).[c]

The Man with the Iron Mask

For a long time Fouquet's end remained a mystery; and even Voltaire, writing little more than a half century afterwards, says, "We do not know where died the unfortunate man, whose least actions in the days of his power made a stir." For this reason attempts were afterwards made to connect Fouquet with one of the most extraordinary episodes of the secret history of Louis XIV's reign.[a]

We know that a masked and unknown prisoner, object of an extraordinary surveillance, died in 1703 in the Bastille, whither he had been brought from the Isle Ste. Marguerite in 1698 (and was buried under the name of Marchiali). He had been detained about ten years in these islands, and traces of his existence are found in the fortress of Exilles and at Pinerolo as far back as 1681. Now no great personage disappeared in Europe about this time. What powerful motive had the government of Louis XIV for concealing this mysterious visage from human sight? Many explanations more or less chimeric, more or less plausible, have been attempted of the "man with the iron mask" (an erroneous term; the mask was not of iron but of black velvet; it was probably one of those *loups* so long in use). In 1837 Le Bibliophile Jacob (Paul la Croix) published an ingenious volume to prove that Fouquet was passed off as dead, sequestered anew, and, masked, dragged from fortress to fortress until his death in 1703.[d]

Many other theories have been advanced to account for this person's identity. It has been said that he was a twin brother of Louis XIV, who had been made to disappear; the count de Vermandois, natural son of Louis XIV and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who was imprisoned for having struck the dauphin; the duke de Beaufort, who disappeared at the siege of Candia (1669); the duke of Monmouth, nephew of James II; Count Girolamo Mattioli, minister of Mantua, who was abducted from Turin for having prevented his master from selling Casale to the king of France (this hypothesis is sustained by Topin *g*); or Giovanni di Gonzaga, Mattioli's secretary; a son of Anne of Austria by Buckingham or Mazarin; the Armenian patriarch Avedick; and, according to a recent theory of M. Bazeries, a certain general De Bulonde, imprisoned for raising the siege of Candia in spite of Catinat's orders.[h] But the very multiplicity of theories sufficiently shows the doubtful character of each and all of them; and the identification of the man with the iron mask still holds a place among the most curious of the unsolved enigmas of history.[a]

THE MINISTRY OF COLBERT

The great trial of Fouquet involved another victim: Pellisson was condemned to restore 200,000 livres. But he was one of those skilful persons who, having fallen, always rise. From having been a Calvinist he became a Catholic and perhaps died a Protestant; from being Fouquet's friend he became the favourite of the king [Louis XIV] and drew up his *Mémoires*[f] in which he speaks of the superintendent's thefts, and he founded a prize at the Academy for an annual eulogy of Louis XIV. Thanks to his verses and his prose, which were supple like his conduct, he was very successful in money matters. In 1677 he was in receipt of 75,000 livres, just the same sum as Vauban

received, without counting abbeys and priories. Finally he was a kind of prime minister and had charge of the funds devoted to the conversion of heretics, and yet he brought so much dignity into his office that posterity has forgotten in him the man of business and only remembers the man of letters. Colbert succeeded Fouquet with the title of controller-general. In 1666 Michel le Tellier left his charge to his son, the celebrated Louvois; the first ministry of Louis XIV was thus complete.

Colbert directed five of the French departments of administration: the king's household, with the fine arts, the finances, agriculture, with commerce, public works, and, after 1669, the navy—a crushing weight under which he did not succumb.

"Jean Baptiste Colbert," says a contemporary, "had naturally a frowning countenance. His hollow eyes and thick eyebrows gave him an air of austerity and rendered him at first sight savage and forbidding; but afterwards when one came to know him, he was sufficiently facile, expeditious, and immutably steadfast. He was persuaded that good faith is the solid foundation of all business. Infinite application and an insatiable desire to learn took with him the place of knowledge. He was a restorer of the finances, which on his accession to the ministry he found in a very bad condition. A solid but ponderous intelligence, born principally for calculation, he disentangled all the embarrassments which the superintendents and royal treasurers had purposely introduced into the accounts in order that they might fish in troubled waters." Let us add that this austere and hard financier, "this man of marble," as Gui Patin calls him, had a heart. "We must be careful of every five sous in matters which are not of necessity," he wrote to Louis XIV, "and lavish millions when it is a question of your glory. A useless banquet costing 3,000 livres gives me incredible pain; and when it is a question of millions of gold for the affair of Poland, I would sell all my goods, I would pledge my wife and children, and I would go on foot all my life to provide them."

Reorganisation of the Finances

The finances, indeed, had fallen back into the chaos from which Sully had rescued them. The public debt was four hundred and thirty millions, the revenues were swallowed up three years in advance, and out of eighty-four millions in annual imposts the treasury received scarcely thirty-five. Colbert began by annulling or reimbursing at the rate of purchase eight millions of bonds on the Hôtel-de-Ville, which had been acquired at an insignificant price, and caused the *chambre de police* to make an investigation of the malversations committed by officers of finance during the last twenty-five years; the very curés had to press their parishioners to denounce abuses. The money lenders who had taken advantage of the necessities of the state to lend to it at usurious interest were made to disgorge their profits; the fines rose to one hundred and ten millions; several money lenders were hanged. These were measures in harmony with the spirit of the times but not in accordance with good policy; the surest way for the state to avoid having to submit to burdensome contracts in evil days is to hold, in good ones, to a promise once given, because there are no usurers save for those who are suspected of not paying their debts.

Colbert was the true creator of the budget. Hitherto money had been dispensed haphazard, without consulting the receipts of the treasury. He was the first to draw up annually a provisional statement divided into two

[1661 A.D.]

chapters in which the probable revenues and expenses were set down beforehand. When a secretary of state had a disbursement to make he signed an order for the intended payment; the persons receiving it presented it at the office of the controller-general's department, when the payment of the sum was charged on a particular fund and this assignment was presented for the king's signature.

Colbert modified the form and assessment of the imposts. The *taille*, or tax on landed property, was personal, that is it was paid by the *roturiers* and in certain circumstances two or three times in the same year. He wished to make it real as it was in the south, as it now is everywhere — that is to say, payable on the landed property, whoever the holders might be. In 1661 it had reached fifty-three millions; he brought it back to thirty-two. Amid the troubles of the Fronde many persons had been ennobled on their own authority or had bought titles of nobility for a few crowns; these were so many privileged individuals added to the real ones. As early as 1662 Molière in the *École des femmes* had laughed at this vanity which cost the people dear. A royal ordinance revoked all the letters of nobility granted within the last thirty years: Gros-Pierre was obliged to show his titles and had none, and nearly forty thousand families amongst the richest in the parishes were once more subjected to the impost which proportionately lightened the burdens of their neighbours.



COLBERT
(1619–1683)

The controller-general rightfully preferred to the *taille* the *aides* or indirect taxes to which all contributed. He diminished the price of salt, a commodity of the first necessity to the poor; but he increased or created taxes on coffee, tobacco, wines, cards, etc., and from one million five hundred thousand francs brought them up to twenty-one millions. Thus the indirect taxes, some of which have been so vigorously attacked in our own day, had their origin in an idea of justice and equality.

He disliked loans, not because he did not understand the advantage of borrowing at a low price to repay burdensome debts, but he dreaded giving Louis XIV facilities for burdening the future to the advantage of the present. On leaving the council in which the first loan was decided on, in 1672, he bitterly reproached Lamoignon for having approved this measure. "Do you know as I do the man with whom we have to deal, his passion for display, for great enterprises, for all kinds of expenses? Here is a free course opened for loans and by consequence for unlimited expenditure and taxes. You shall answer for it to the nation and to posterity."

In truth a time was to come when Colbert would be no longer there and Louis XIV would borrow at 400 per cent. At least the great minister tried

to protect the treasury against the exigencies of the financiers by inviting the small capitalists to pour their funds directly, without costly intermediaries, into a loan account which he established for the purpose and into which the money flowed.[c]

Colbert's efforts extended into so many fields that it is impossible to follow them in detail. His service to agriculture was most beneficial. He exempted very large families from paying tithes, and forbade the seizure of implements and beasts of labour for non-payment of taxes. He improved the breeds of horses and cattle by crossing them with imported animals. His code for water highways and forests is still largely in force.

He assisted industry by sparing no means of obtaining the manufacturing secrets of neighbouring countries. In 1669, says Duruy,[c] there were 42,220 looms and more than 60,000 workers in wool alone. The draperies of Sedan, Louviers, Abbeville, and Elbeuf were unrivalled in Europe; tin plate, steel, faience, and morocco leather, which had largely been imported, were now made in France; the cloth and serges of Holland, Genoese point, and velvets were imitated and equalled, the carpets of Persia and Turkey surpassed at the Savonnerie, at Aubusson, and at Beauvais. The rich silken stuffs shot with gold and silver were made at Tours and at Lyons; at Tour-la-Ville (near Cherbourg) and at Paris they made finer glassware than at Venice. The tapestries of Flanders yielded to those of the Gobelins.

For commerce the great minister did much by regulating customs and reducing tariffs. He made Dunkirk, Bayonne, and Marseilles free ports, and was the projector of the Burgundian canal opened in 1692, and built between 1664 and 1681, that connected the Mediterranean at Cette with the Garonne (and consequently the ocean) at Toulouse. Henry IV's council of commerce was re-established in 1665 and the king presided over its fortnightly meetings.

At that period the Dutch and the English were far ahead of the French in foreign trade. The better to compete with these rivals Colbert substituted privileged associations for the isolated efforts of individuals. "He established," says Duruy,[c] "five great companies modelled on the English and Dutch societies; those of the *Indes Orientales* and the *Indes Occidentales* in 1664; the *Compagnie du Nord* and the *Compagnie du Levant* in 1666, and the *Compagnie du Sénégal* in 1673, according them exclusive commercial monopolies and granting them considerable loans. He wished to restore life to the colonial system, much neglected since the days of Richelieu. The French now possessed only Canada, with Acadia, Cayenne, the Île de Bourbon [Île de Réunion], and several establishments in Madagascar and the Indies. Colbert purchased, for less than a million, Martinique, Guadeloupe, St. Lucia, Grenada, and the Grenadines, Marie Galante, St. Martin, St. Christopher, St. Bartholomew, Santa Cruz, and Tortuga (Île de la Tortue) in the West Indies. He placed under the protection of France the French filibusters of Santo Domingo who had seized the western portion of the island (1664). He planted new colonies in Cayenne (1677) and in Canada (1665). He took Newfoundland in order to control the entrance to the St. Lawrence, and began the occupation of the magnificent valley of the Mississippi, which had just been explored by that adventurous captain, Robert de la Salle (1680). In Africa he wrested Gorée in Senegal from the Dutch in 1665 and took possession of the east coast of Madagascar. In Asia the *Compagnie des Indes* established itself at Surat and Chandarnagar and afterwards at Pondicherry," but to offset these achievements he was short-sighted enough to close the colonial ports to foreign vessels and to forbid in 1669 the importation of sugar and tobacco from Brazil.

[1661–1683 A.D.]

Colbert also revived the navy and established the naval inscription by which the people of these maritime provinces, in return for certain advantages, furnished the necessary recruits for the navy, dividing them according to age and family position into different classes (the *régime des classes*). He likewise instituted in 1672 the corps of marine guards, composed of one thousand gentlemen, in order to have good officers, a school of cannoneers for good marksmen, a school of hydrography, and a board of naval construction.

For the encouragement of the fine arts and the sciences, the Academy of Inscriptions and Belle-Lettres was founded in 1663, the Academy of Science in 1666, the Academy of Music (1669), the Academy of Architecture in 1671. "A school of fine arts established at Rome (1667) received the prize pupils of the Academy of Painting in Paris who copied on canvas or in marble the masterpieces of antiquity. The cabinet of medals founded also a school for the study of oriental languages. The Royal Library received many additions and the Mazarine Library was opened to the public. The Jardin des Plantes was enlarged and the foundation of academies in the provinces encouraged. All the famous littérateurs and artists of the day were generally pensioned, including many from foreign countries who were induced to take up their residence in France.[a]

Michelet's Estimate of Colbert

The king in 1683 was relieved of Colbert. He pressed heavily upon him, forced him to reckon, was always talking of making the receipts balance the expenditures. In his long ministry of twenty years he had passed through two phases. During the first he tried to live on the revenue; during the second, dragged on and compelled, he borrowed and lived on the future. One moment he lightened the taxes and nevertheless collected ninety millions; but the king spent one hundred millions.

Between him and the king there was a dispute about everything: concerning buildings — he condemned Versailles: concerning religion — he upheld the Protestant manufacturers. He died from his public disgrace — died because he could do nothing and had lost hope. Ridiculous quarrels were forced upon him. The king reproached him for the expense of Versailles, which had been built in spite of his advice to the contrary.[1]

He died, detested and cursed. It was found necessary to bury him at night to protect his body from the insults of the populace. Songs were composed, *ponts neufs* on the death of the tyrant. Was this word wrongly applied? Not at all. This great man had been the tyrant of France in two ways at once — tyrant through his position, the times, and the necessity of things; tyrant through his violence in well doing and his impatience, through his impulsiveness of will.

The war and Louvois, the king and the court, Versailles and the immense waste had been blamed very justly. But there was something else. The situation was tyrannical. Colbert built on a foundation already ruined, on that of the misery which grew in that century without anything being able to stop it — political and moral causes come from afar, above all, the indolence of the nobility and of the Catholics, which after having ruined Spain

[1 Louis XIV had little love for Paris and created Versailles, or rather greatly enlarged the old château of Louis XIII, by making immense additions, and by constructing the fine façade on the park side which, with its extended wings, made it the most superb and vast abode in the world.c]

was about to ruin France. Mazarin had killed Colbert in advance. The tax placed by the league of notables on the small landholder, which was doubled about 1648, compelled him to sell his field to the lord of the parish. But these fields, gathered together under idle hands, produced little. Under Colbert there was a famine every three years. To sustain the army and the working classes with ease, he himself kept the wheat at a low price, almost always forbidding its exportation, thus discouraging agricultural labour. From 1600 to 1700 every manufactured article quintupled in value. Wheat alone was treated as a natural product, in connection with which labour would avail nothing; nothing was done for it; it remained at the same price. That evil of Spain, the hatred of work, the taste for a life of ease had for a long time been inoculated in France. Colbert revolved in the circle of a fatal contradiction. He wanted to discourage idleness, he said; he struck at the false nobles. With what? With the authority of the king — of the king of nobles, who, attracting everything to the court, "ennobling" the nation, drew it into idleness. The dead and unproductive life of the courtier, of the priest, more and more deadened everything.

This man of work was devoured by three great unproductive classes: the nobles, who more and more lived on the state; the officials, whom the progress of order brought into existence; the third class, the permanent army, enormously increased. Now, the king drawing little or nothing from the large rich body, that is the clergy, Colbert, triply crushed, was obliged to create a productive class, to over-stimulate work by driving industry abroad. War of customs duties, and soon a war of armies, resulted. He himself, who was so interested in maintaining peace, actively engaged in the war against Holland, and expected to gain something from it for the navy and for industry.

History can cite nothing greater or more terrible than his sudden improvisation of the marine. It astonishes, it frightens, both by material enormity and by moral violence. Colbert demanded from France the severest sacrifice which had ever been asked of her (before the conscription[1]).

He showed the same vehement impatience in commercial regulations, in the improvisation of a French industry. He was justly indignant at seeing an ingenious people, very artistic in many things, awaiting and receiving from elsewhere all the products of the useful arts. Manufactories are not only a product of wealth but of education also, a special development of certain faculties, of a certain aptitude. A people who did only one thing would be very low in the scale of nations. Colbert awakened and revealed in the French people an unknown aptitude; he caused a new art to burst forth, that above all, which puts good taste and elegance into all the requirements for the fitting out of a house, which relieves material life by a noble gleam of mind. It was splendid, it was grand of him. But the means were less happy. On the one hand, this budding industry he wanted perfect all at once; that young plant which could not grow without the liberties of life he confined and choked with tyrannical precautions. Almost at the outset, his regulations were laws of terror (even to putting a person in the pillory for defective merchandise, 1670). By requiring this perfection he hoped to gain credit for French goods abroad and to make people buy them with confidence. But, on the other hand, he prevented the manufacture of goods of inferior quality, to satisfy the less pretentious needs of the poorer classes.

The grandeur of this industrial creation has been told wonderfully well;

[1 The above mentioned *régime des classes.*]

but not its fall, its prompt decadence. It perished both from the general poverty (no more buyers) and from emigration (the producers left even before the death of Colbert). His last glances beheld the decay of the edifice which was soon to crumble to pieces.

The great historian of France for the end of this century is Pesant de Boisguillebert. He is not acquainted with ancient times and he is wrong in thinking that evils date from 1660. He is none the less truthful and admirable in the picture he gives of the misery of the country and of the crying abuses which continued even under Colbert. The three fiscal terrors (*tailles*, *aides*, *douanes*) are found there in characters of fire. One must see the unfortunate peasant collectors, who raise the land-tax and are responsible for it, march through the village. They go only together in companies for fear of being killed. But it is impossible to take away anything from him who has nothing. Everything falls back upon the collectors. The king's bailiff seizes their cattle, the village flocks, then even their persons. They are imprisoned.



COSTUME OF A NOBLEMAN, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

The case of the aides is much worse. The clerks, become merchants, make a fierce war on the merchants who wish to buy wine from the vine grower and not from them. All communication is broken off. "Everything which comes from Japan quadruples its price, merely on account of the distance. But everything here which passes from one province to another becomes twenty times dearer, twenty-four times. Wine for a sou at Orleans is worth twenty-four at Rouen. The salesman alone is six times more terrible than pirates and tempests, than a sea of four thousand leagues." France pulls up its vines. The people no longer drink anything but water. The custom-house has killed foreign commerce. No merchant dares any longer to put himself in the hands of a receiver, who brings a suit against him if he wishes and who is judged only by his own judges.

Thus the people, thus Colbert, remained the miserable slaves of the financiers, of the general farmers of the taxes, of negotiators, of partisans more powerful than the king. Colbert, on his coming to power, had had the good fortune to hang several of them. In vain. They survived and flourished and in the end strangled him; much worse, they caused his name to be cursed. Under Mazarin there was absolute chaos. Under Colbert there was relative order. The old abuses subsisted, but with the odious force of order which an established government lent to them. Under Mazarin France, miserable and in rags, still drank wine; but under Colbert it drank water.

Progress was an evil. Under Colbert, the farming of the taxes was not given out to favourites, but was sold at auction, to the highest bidder, and thus it brought in more. Yes, but on the condition that the farmers were permitted

to use the terrible severity which made tax collecting a war. In his mortal effort Colbert thus acted against himself. She escaped him, however, do what he would — this France whom he wished to cure, tormented by *recors*, eaten up by bailiffs' men, expropriated, sold, and executed.

The great malediction under which he died troubled him on his death-bed. A letter from the king came to him and he did not wish to read it. "If I had done for God," said he, "what I have done for this man, I would be sure of being saved, and I do not know where I am going." We know it, hero! You are going into glory. You remain in the heart of France. Great nations, who judge with time like God, are as equitable as he, valuing the labour less according to the result than in proportion to the effort, the grandeur of the desire.[1]

After Colbert's death his ministry was divided. The marquis of Seignelay, his son, had the navy; the finances were intrusted to Claude le Pelletier (1683–1689), later by the count de Pontchartrain (1689–1699); these last succeeded but did not replace him. After 1689 the general penury was such, that Louis was obliged to send to the mint the masterpieces in chiselled silver which adorned Versailles.

LOUVOIS

Colbert had organised peace; Louvois, "the greatest and most brutal of clerks," organised war. François Michel le Tellier, marquis de Louvois, was born in 1641. At the age of fifteen years he entered the office of his father, the secretary of state, and was initiated by a long apprenticeship into the science of military administration, to which he brought an activity equal to that of Colbert. When Louis XIV determined to assume the rule, Louvois became the real minister of war, although he did not succeed his father, Michel le Tellier, till 1666. He reformed the army, and his reforms lasted as long as the old monarchy. If he preserved the system of voluntary enlistment which had been in practice for three centuries, he diminished abuses and dangers by a more exact discipline and more severe regulations. He established uniforms by ordering that each regiment should be distinguished by the colour of its clothes and by various marks (1670). He introduced the use of copper pontoons for crossing rivers; he instituted magazines of food and supplies, barracks, military hospitals, the Hôtel des Invalides, all things almost unknown before his time. He created the corps of engineers whence came the great Vauban's best pupils; schools of artillery at Douai, Metz, and Strasburg, the companies of grenadiers in the infantry, the regiments of hussars in the cavalry, and lastly cadet companies, a species of military school for the *gentilshommes*.

The army still showed the spirit of feudal times. The soldier belonged less to the king than to his colonel; the cavalry was given too much importance and the nobility would serve only in it. From this reign the French infantry became and long remained the first in the world. Louvois required it to march in step and substituted the gun and bayonet for the pike which was still prevalent; but it was not till after his time that Vauban succeeded in making the gun at once a weapon for projectiles and a weapon for fencing, and so rendered it the most formidable instrument of destruction which was ever put into the hands of men.

He made a revolution in the army by the *ordre du tableau* and by the creation of the service of inspection. He did not destroy the venality of offices which had been introduced into the army, and was exercised

almost entirely to the profit of the nobles; but in order to merit promotion it was no longer sufficient for them to have ancestors — they must have services; and the grades, from the rank of colonel, became the prize of seniority — an excellent reform in those days, which would be so now no longer. The hatred of the nobility pursued the minister who was degrading "those born to command others, on the pretext that it is reasonable to learn to obey in order to command; who wished to accustom seigneurs to equality and to mingle with all the world indiscriminately." Louvois, with inflexible firmness, required that each should perform his duty; to secure this he instituted inspectors-general who made the king's authority and his own everywhere present; and severe rebukes awaited negligent officers.

He created recreation camps, a ruinous innovation when these assemblies of troops were only a spectacle to divert the ladies of the court and the king's *ennui*, but an excellent school for officers and generals when preparing for the great manœuvres of war. It was only after his death that the order of St. Louis was instituted (1693) for the purpose of bestowing honours as a reward for military services — this time without distinction of birth, but not without distinction of religion; the reformed could not obtain it. By such measures France was able to have under arms, in the war of Flanders, 125,000 men; for that with Holland, 180,000; before Ryswick, 300,000; during the War of the Spanish Succession, 450,000.

VAUBAN

There was one point, the only one, perhaps, on which the minister of war and the minister of marine were in accord: namely, the fortification of the kingdom. To accomplish this immense work they found the man who is, with Colbert, the greatest of this reign. Le Prestre de Vauban was a *gentilhomme* of no great family, who was born at Saulieu in Burgundy in 1633. His father died in the service, leaving him only his name. A prior of the neighbourhood took him in and brought him up. When he had completed his seventeenth year the Fronde was in full swing. Eleven of his brothers, uncles, and relatives were under arms; one morning Vauban ran away and hastened to join the Great Condé, who received him as a cadet and soon made him an officer.

Vauban fought well; he studied more. The good prior had given him some notions of geometry; he developed them and these first acquirements decided his vocation. Having passed into the royal army he served under the chevalier de Clerville, the most renowned engineer of that time, and at twenty-five directed the works during the sieges of Gravelines, Ypres, and Oudenarde. In 1668 his reputation was so great that Louis XIV charged him with the fortification of Dunkirk. This first work of the young engineer was a masterpiece: two moles projecting over six thousand feet into the water and defended by formidable batteries created a harbour where nature had put only an unfavourable shore. The waters inside and those of the high tides skilfully manipulated, incessantly hollowed the channel and restored to the sea the mud it brought up. Henceforth Vauban was the indispensable man whom every general demanded when he had a siege to make. In time of war he took towns; in time of peace he fortified them. It has been calculated that he worked on 300 old towns, that he constructed 33 new ones, that he conducted 53 sieges, and was present at 140 important actions. He was several times wounded; for in order to reconnoitre the situation of a place and to spare the blood of his soldiers, he exposed himself

in such a manner as to call forth the accusation of temerity, had not his cool and deliberate courage been like the fulfilment of a duty.

Vauban, who fortified towns, knew still better how to take them. He introduced the use of hollow cannon-balls for dispersing earth; ricochet firing to dismount the artillery of the besieged and destroy the angles of the bastions; above all he perfected the parallels at the siege of Maestricht in 1673. These parallels joined the trenches which converged towards the town, and gave the attack the advantage over the defence. Vauban went forward slowly but surely; he marched under cover by lines on which the troops were in a position to render each other mutual support, did not hurry on attacks when he could dispense with them, took pains to spare the soldiers, who had previously been flung away, and attained his object incomparably more quickly and with fewer losses, because he first silenced the enemy's fire and left on the ramparts neither a tenable point nor a cannon in condition to be fired. There was no longer any impregnable fortress and it was easy to look forward to the day when every well-besieged town would be taken. It is to him that we also owe the invention of the socket which allows the infantry to fire whilst still keeping the bayonet at the end of the gun.

SÉGUIER, LEGISLATIVE WORKS

In a memorial handed to the king, August 15th, 1665, Colbert had proposed to remodel the whole legislation so that there should be in France but one law, one system of weights and measures; in addition he asked for gratuitous justice, the abolition of the venality of offices, the price of which was reckoned at four hundred and twenty millions, and the diminution of the number of monks, and the encouragement of useful callings.

A commission was appointed. When the members had held a meeting and at last brought their task to a conclusion they discussed the matter with eminent members of the parliament in the presence of the ministers, under the presidency of the chancellor Séguier, sometimes under that of the king Six codes were the result of these deliberations: in 1667 the civil ordinance or Code Louis which abolished some iniquitous procedure belonging to the justice of the Middle Ages, "true witness of human imbecility," says Montaigne, shortened its delays and regulated the form of the registers of births, marriages, and deaths which, it was ordered, were to be deposited at the office of each law-court; in 1669 that of Rivers and Forests which continues in its principal dispositions; in 1670 the ordinance of Criminal Instruction which the parliaments accepted only after many *lettres de cachet* and decrees of exile; it restricted the application of the torture and various cases of provisional imprisonment, fixed rights of jurisdiction so that none might be deprived of his natural judges, laid down identical rules for all tribunals, thus preparing the way for unity of principle by means of unity of form, but did not yet allow either counsel or defender for the accused in capital cases, preserved the atrocity of earlier penalties, the wheel and quartering, and still made the penalty disproportionate to the crime; in 1673 the ordinance of Commerce, a true title to glory for Colbert; in 1681 that of the Navy and the Colonies, which has formed the common law of the nations of Europe and serves them to this day as maritime law; in 1685 the Black Code, which regulated the condition of negroes in the French colonies.

These ordinances form the greatest work of codification executed from Justinian to Napoleon. Some portions of them are still in operation.

LIONNE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

If Colbert and Louvois, by the re-establishment of the finances, the creation of a navy, and the reform of the army, allowed Louis XIV to make war successfully, Lionne, secretary of state for foreign affairs, prepared that success by his negotiations. "He had," says Choisy, "a superior genius: his understanding, naturally keen and penetrating, had been still further sharpened in the affairs in which the cardinal had early employed him." Saint-Simon, who was no flatterer, also says that he did everything with a skill and superiority quite unequalled. The king indeed watched closely over this branch; he himself wrote the first despatches to his ambassadors; he often wrote minutes of the most important letters with his own hand, and he always had the instructions sent in his name read aloud to him.



A Court Costume, Time of Louis XIV

When Lionne died in 1671 the king gave him as successor the marquis de Pomponne who had conducted several embassies with success and was then in Sweden, whose king he had succeeded in detaching from the Dutch alliance. Pomponne directed all the negotiations which terminated in the Peace of Nimeguen. "But," said Louis XIV, "the office I gave him was found to be too great and extensive for him. I was obliged to order him to retire, because everything that passed through his hands lost something of the grandeur and force which are needed in executing the orders of a king of France who is not unfortunate."

TRIUMPH OF THE ABSOLUTE MONARCHY

Some of these ministers of Louis XIV, especially Colbert and Louvois, were certainly great administrators; they were not, they could not be, great statesmen. Colbert himself aimed at making France richer only in order to render the king more powerful; and all laboured to constitute the excessive centralisation which enveloped the whole country, its industry and commerce, the arms and the brain, with a thousand bonds of a minute regulation, so that the initiative of the ministers was everywhere substituted for the action of individuals and communities. The result of this system was to be that France would live less by her own vitality than by that of her government. When age and sickness should freeze that ever-present hand all would decline. A great people would be subjected to the vicissitudes of one man's existence.

If the administration of the realm was as much the work of Louis XIV's ministers as his own, one thing belonged to him alone: this was the general

direction he gave to the government and to society — the skilful and energetic manner with which he knew how to control all other powers, to annul them, and make them to serve his greatness; it was in fact that art of ruling which no other prince, in Saint-Simon's judgment, possessed to a greater degree. We have already seen his ideas on the rights of sovereigns; he had summed them up in that phrase attributed to him, it is said, in his youth, at the end of the Fronde: "*L'État, c'est moi* — The State, it is I."[1]

He believed this; everybody believed it with him, and the church taught it. Bossuet founded the divine right of the monarchy on maxims drawn from the Scriptures. "Oh kings, ye are gods," exclaimed the great bishop at the very moment that Lebrun was filling Versailles with the apotheosis of Louis XIV. While he lived there was but one uncontrolled and limitless will — his own. The states-general might have recalled other wills, but he never convoked it; he punished those that spoke of it, and when, at the Treaty of Utrecht, the allies, still defying his ambition, tried to exact that the conditions of peace should be ratified by a national assembly, he haughtily refused and declared that he regarded the demand as an insult to the majesty of the throne. The minority of the provinces had their own estates, but he suppressed many of them. Those which remained, as in Languedoc, Burgundy, Provence, Brittany, etc., never assembled except to execute the orders of the ministers. Whatever remained of municipal liberty disappeared like that of the provinces. The king, coining money with the ancient rights dear to the towns, changed the mayoralties into hereditary offices and sold them to the highest bidders. An edict of 1683 placed the financial administration of the towns under the direction of the intendants. Their finances did not improve. The communities were made reponsible for the payment of the *taille* as the *curiates* had been under the Roman emperors. Former fiscal arrangements had ruined the magistrates. The new one held them exempt, but ruined the communes.

A phrase sums up this entire policy — unfortunately it was spoken by Colbert: "It is not well," he wrote to a governor, charging him to let an elective magistracy fall into desuetude, "that some one should speak in the name of all."

Submission of Parliament

Royalty had taken five centuries to undermine the great body of the feudal aristocracy, and the better to perfect this work had formed with its own hands another body — that of the judiciary order. In the sixteenth century they spoke of the parliaments as "the strong columns on which the monarchy is supported," but in the seventeenth the new royalty wished for no other support than its absolute power.

Nevertheless, thanks to the sale of offices, which left the same offices in the same hands, thanks to the dignity of the magistrate's lives, to the political rôles they had played on several occasions, to the *esprit de corps* which had quickly been established in the bosom of the great judiciary companies, there had been raised alongside the nobility of the sword a nobility of the robe, which seemed quite as troublesome as the other because it already had its souvenirs and regrets. It was not always easily managed. It parried attacks with that force of inertia peculiar to assemblies of aged men, which is difficult to overcome at a time when tradition stands for law. The spirit

[1] If the words were not uttered the thought was certainly present. Louis XIV is known to have written on one occasion, "The nation does not constitute a body in France; it resides entirely in the person of the king."]

of opposition, everywhere punished, took refuge here—political opposition, scarcely sensible in the parliament of Paris, provincial opposition in the others, all religious opposition, under the form of Jansenism. One of Louis XIV's ideas which he sought to realise with the greatest perseverance was to transform the parliaments into simple courts of appeal, to put his state councils over them, even the parliament of Paris which had brought about the Fronde. In an edict of 1667 he proscribed it from enregistering ordinances within a week and he suffered no remonstrance. The following year he had torn from the parliament registers the records of all its deliberations during the civil war, in order to efface even the memory of its old-time pretensions. Besides this he changed its title of sovereign court into that of superior court, as if the first were a usurpation of royal sovereignty.

Submission of the Nobility

It appeared a more difficult task to reduce the nobles. Cardinal Richelieu had razed their fortresses and cut off the heads of some of the most unruly. Mazarin had bought them or vanquished them by ruse. Louis XIV made himself their master by drawing them around him by his fêtes, dragging them from their domains, where they thought too often of their ancestors and still felt themselves free, filling his antechamber and household posts with the descendants of those who had made his fathers tremble, and forming for royalty such brilliant corteges as the representative of God on earth would wish to be surrounded by.

If they had titles and honours they had no political influence in the state. In his councils, the king, after the death of Mazarin, admitted but a single one of the old noblesse, the duke de Beauvilliers, governor of the royal children; and he chose all his ministers from those of middle conditions, in order, according to Saint-Simon's[i] forceful expression, to be able "to plunge them into the depths of nothingness from which he had drawn them." The French nobility never knew how, like that of England, to become a political class; it was never anything but a military caste.

The Third Estate

Louis XIV preferred, following in this the ancient monarchical traditions, to be served by the middle class, more educated and, moreover, more devoted, because it did not yet feel the inconveniences of absolute power, as it had been feeling for centuries those of the feudal régime. Louis turned over to it all the financial, political, and judicial functions; he established it peacefully in the administration of the realm; he pushed it energetically towards commerce and industry—two forces of the new era—and the regard he had for those *petites gens* named Boileau, Racine, Molière, announced the coming substitution of the rights of intellect for those of birth. Louis XIV thus unknowingly paved the way for democracy in France and the Revolution. However he must not be regarded as a sort of bourgeois king, a *roi des maltôtiers*, as Saint-Simon[i] disdainfully calls him. His policy, the high idea he had of his person, the rigorous ceremonial which made a sort of redoubtable and inaccessible divinity of him, the *carrousels*, the brilliant fêtes—none of these recalls to mind the modest pictures of constitutional monarchies.[1] More than that, those nobodies whom Louis made his councillors, his ambas-

[1 In 1680 the Paris *corps de ville* solemnly conferred on the king the title of Louis the Great, which, hitherto used sometimes on medals, now became *de rigueur* in official language.[d]]

sadors, and his secretaries of state quitted their plebeian state before entering his court. They became the marquis de Louvois, the count de Pontchartrain, the marquis de Torcy. While working with the bourgeois, the grandson of Henry IV always had the desire to remain the king of the noblemen.

LOUIS XIV AND THE CHURCH

Louis XIV conducted himself towards the clergy as he had done towards the nobility—in honouring them he watched to see that they robbed him of none of his power. The great lords, with but few exceptions, were removed from the church as they had been from the administration. Therefore the aristocratic Saint-Simon reproaches Louis "with having ruined the episcopacy by filling it with seminarian pedants and their pupils without education and without birth" — a strange reproach from the mouth of a man who had lived with Bossuet, Fénelon, Fléchier, and Massillon, the eternal honour of the French church.



STREET COSTUME, TIME OF LOUIS XIV
(From an old French print)

The clergy was therefore under Louis XIV one force the more at the disposal of royalty. In the affair of the *régale*, the bishops even upheld the king against Rome. The *régale* was the king's right to enjoy the revenues of certain benefices, bishoprics, and archbishoprics, during vacancies in the sees. In 1673 an edict declared all the French sees subject to the *régale*. Two bishops refused to obey and their action was approved by the pope. Louis XIV, to end the dispute, convoked an assembly of French clergy which adopted, in 1682, under the inspiration of Bossuet, four propositions which were registered by the courts and the faculty of theology. They were in substance: God gave to St. Peter and his successors no power, direct or indirect, over temporal affairs. The Gallican church approves those decrees of the Council of Constance which declare the œcumenical councils superior to the pope in spiritual affairs. The rules and customs received in the kingdom and in the Gallican church must remain unalterable. The pope's decisions, in matter of doctrine, shall not be irreformable until the church has accepted them.

Innocent XI neither approved nor quashed these resolutions, but he refused to grant bulls of investiture to those bishops, appointed by the government, who had been members of the assembly. The consequence was that at his death there were twenty dioceses without heads. The matter was, however, brought to a conclusion in 1693 by a compromise. Innocent XII granted the bulls of investiture and the king ceased to impose upon the theological faculties the obligation of teaching the four propositions of 1682.

The Protestants

The dissenters profited nothing by the quarrel with the court of Rome.c Since the Peace of Alais the Protestants, being deprived of their political organisation, of their "towns of security," and of everything which had helped to form them into a party, had been living in obscurity, doing their best to make their enemies forget them, and carefully abstaining from taking any part in the civil troubles of the time. During the Fronde not one of them had shown any sign of life. Their attitude towards the government was that of a child in disgrace, and towards the Catholics that of a disdainful enemy. They persisted in isolating themselves from the rest of the nation, and continued to correspond with their friends in England and Holland. They were law-abiding, peaceable, and industrious citizens, and contributed their full share to the greatness and prosperity of their country by their courage and their energy.

Nevertheless, the nation continued to look on them with mistrust, as if they were foreigners; France felt as if there were a little Holland in her midst, rejoicing at the success of the greater one (with which it was then waging ineffectual war). To reunite the Protestants with the national church was a fixed idea with Louis XIV. This desire inspired his policy, and was the chief goal of all his efforts; this was to be "the noble work and special feature of his reign"; and he looked upon the enterprise as a noble one, not only from a political but from a religious point of view. He was beginning to get into a narrow devotional groove, and allowed the Jesuits to exercise a powerful influence over him. He wished to free himself from the reproach of heresy, which his conduct towards the pope had drawn down upon him, and to atone for the irregularities of his youth. He resolved to revoke the Edict of Nantes. The assembly of the clergy, the parliament of Toulouse, the Catholics in the south all advocated this measure so strongly that it appeared to be the general desire of the nation; Louvois in his ambition, Le Tellier in his fanatical piety, also did their best to urge the king on, and last, but not least, Madame de Maintenon, whose influence during the rest of his life was to be paramount, threw all the weight of her persuasions into the scale in order to bring about the revocation of this edict.

Up to this time bribery had been the chief means employed in the attempts to convert the Protestants. Richelieu had used this method with great success. Louis XIV followed his example with favourable results; flattery, favours, rewards of every kind were lavishly bestowed in the attempt to gain over the Protestants. Pensions were given to the newly converted, they were exempted from taxation, all sorts of offices were given to them over the heads of staunch Catholics. A fund was formed for making conversions, with Pellisson, a converted Protestant, as director. France was flooded with missions, sermons, tracts, and books of dogma.

Calvinism suffered such severe losses that Madame de Maintenon said, "Very soon it will be ridiculous to belong to that religion." But these methods of bribery and persuasion were not rapid enough, and harsher methods began to be used: royal edicts, parliamentary decisions, and orders issued by governors of provinces and cities rendered the preaching of the reformed doctrines difficult, made the Protestant pastors very uneasy, forbade their synods to assemble. Protestants were deprived of their pensions and of their titles of nobility; the chief burden of the taxes was laid on them; they were excluded from the king's household, from the university, from holding municipal offices. They were also forbidden to practice as

lawyers or doctors. They were expelled from financial offices, the rights of free citizenship were refused to them, they were not allowed to be members of corporations, their schools were closed, any of their places of worship which had been built since 1598 were destroyed, and their children were taken from them to be educated as Catholics. Then the Protestants began to fly from France (1682); but emigration was forbidden under pain of being sent to the galleys.

The Calvinists in the south made one last appeal to the king in March, 1684, begging him to allow them to serve God according to the dictates of their own conscience, or else to take refuge in some other country. For answer, the king sent them a number of missionaries accompanied by a detachment of dragoons, who were supposed to be the most cruel of all the French soldiers. Every day conversions by the hundred were announced to the king. On the 2nd of September all the Protestants of Montauban changed their religion by a resolution passed at a meeting in the town hall; on the 5th of October Montpellier, Castres, Lunel, etc., followed suit; then the dioceses of Gap and Embrun, then the whole of Poitou. The governor of Languedoc said that he had seen sixty thousand people converted in three days. It was thought that nothing more remained to be done, but to publicly announce the destruction of a sect which had only a few adherents left in distant provinces, among the rude inhabitants of the mountainous parts; it was necessary to strike only one more decisive blow and so complete the work for which a long series of unjust acts and the ingenious tyranny of the last fifty years had been the preparation. Père Lachaise, the king's confessor, and Louvois promised that not a single drop of blood should be shed.

Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685 A.D.)

Accordingly on the 22nd of October, 1685, an edict appeared ordaining: (1) The suppression of all the privileges which had been accorded to the Protestants by Henry IV and Louis XIII; (2) the proscription of Protestant worship throughout the kingdom (except Alsace and Strasburg); (3) the expulsion of Protestant ministers, the closing of Protestant schools, and the demolition of the churches, etc. Numerous rewards were given to those who agreed to change their religion; Calvinists were forbidden on pain of being sent to the galleys and the confiscation of their property, to go out of France; permission was given them to remain on their own property and engage in business without their worship being interfered with so long as they did not hold public services.

This edict was received in France with the greatest enthusiasm: sermons, poems, pictures, medals were produced with astounding rapidity to celebrate this great act of unity! At last the whole country was to be under one jurisdiction and under one king! Louis XIV was a second Constantine, a modern Theodosius. Never had any king performed such a wonderful achievement, nor was it likely that any parallel to it would be seen in the future. The whole of Europe was amazed at the promptitude and ease with which this great king had stamped out a heresy which had defied the efforts of six of his predecessors.

The only complaints that arose were directed against the leniency of that clause which allowed the Protestants to worship in their own fashion in private. This clause was only a lure, and Louvois wrote to the governors and those in authority: "His majesty desires that those who refuse to embrace his religion should be treated with the utmost rigour, and those

[1661–1685 A.D.]

who foolishly pride themselves on being the last to be converted are to be driven to the extremity of their endurance." Then began a series of bloody atrocities which the king had never commanded, and which were not at all in accordance with his character for moderation. A defenceless population was delivered over to the cruel brutality of the soldiery, men were put to the torture, women were subjected to a dishonour worse than death, children were torn from their parents, houses and farms were wrecked, converts who refused to take the sacraments were sent to the galleys, as were those who harboured Protestant ministers or those who attempted to leave the kingdom. Sentence of death was pronounced against all who practised any other than the Catholic religion, against all Protestant ministers, and all who formed themselves into gatherings or held meetings. Those who were weak yielded; they were dragged to the altar and, with the executioner standing over them, forced to commit sacrilege. "Torture, abjuration, and forced communion," says Saint-Simon,[i] "often all took place within twenty-four hours," and the executioners were the guides and the sponsors of the convert. Almost all the bishops took part in these hasty irreverent practices. Most of them urged on the executioners and used every means to swell the number of conversions, for they sent an account of their triumphs to the court, and were anxious to gain as much glory and substantial recompense as possible. The king received from all quarters news and details of these persecutions; those who had abjured Protestantism and received the communion were counted by the thousand. The king gloried in his power and in his piety; the bishops sent him the most fulsome panegyrics on the great work he was doing; pulpits rang with his praises.

The Protestants fled from the country. The police were unable to prevent them. Certificates of confession were required from all travellers, sentence of death was pronounced against anyone who countenanced or assisted others in emigrating. The emigrants had been deprived of seventeen millions of francs in house and land property, the frontier was guarded by numerous troops; but all these measures were vain, and in spite of them fifty thousand families left the kingdom, and took refuge in Holland, England, Germany, and Switzerland. They consisted of nobles, tradesmen, and manufacturers. This active, energetic, and enlightened body of men, placed at the service of foreigners their talents, their swords, the secrets of French manufactures, their wealth, and a relentless hatred of the tyrant who had banished them. Their emigration did an irreparable injury to France. They were received everywhere with the greatest kindness; they were even invited to leave their country, and good positions were promised them. One part of London was peopled with silk-weavers and workers in crystal and steel; and England became the leading manufacturing nation. Brandenburg rose from its abasement; Berlin became a town; Prussia was opened up; the influence of the refugees on Frederick William's states was so marked that it is from this time that their greatness and their subsequent weight among European powers may be dated. Amsterdam built a thousand houses for them, William gave them pensions, granted them privileges, and provided them with places of worship; he formed them into a royal guard of six hundred noblemen and two regiments. He made use of their ministers, embittered by hatred, to flood Europe with pamphlets against Louis XIV. Henceforth on every battle-field the French would meet these emigrants filled with a fierce hatred of their country, and, for more than a century afterward, French soldiers found that their bitterest enemies in Germany were the descendants of these refugees.[j]

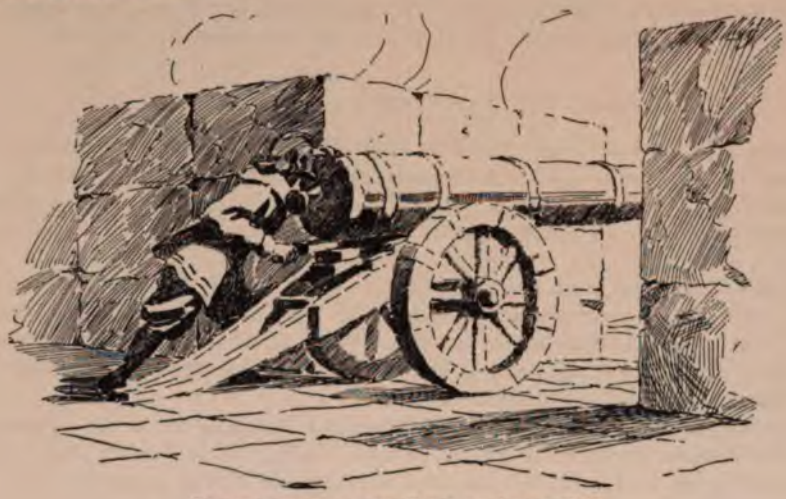
The Jansenists

Nor did Louis protect the Jansenists who were, on certain points, in disagreement with the church of Rome. The Jansenists owed their doctrine to a bishop of Ypres, named Jansenius, who died in 1638, and to the abbé of St. Cyran who had sustained some ancient opinions, which seemed to be new, upon grace and predestination. Jansenism deserves at least a passing word especially on account of the character of the men who defended it. The most illustrious of them, the great Arnauld, Lemaistre de Sacy, Nicole, and Lancelot, retired to the ancient Cistercian abbey of Port-Royal des Champs, near Versailles, when Pascal also joined them in 1654, and there, leading a solitary life, these Catholic puritans set the world an example of assiduous works of the hands and the intellect, of lively piety, and of austerity which went as far as asceticism. They wrote, for the most part in common, some excellent works which are still in use; they had some illustrious pupils, among others Racine; they won over to a great part of their doctrine almost the entire magistracy.[c]

The Jesuits then monopolised the authority and influence of the church, whose spirit and moral code they attempted to modify, and adapt to the present courtly and despotic times. The studious, reasoning, and ascetic brethren of Port-Royal saw the tendency of the Jesuit preaching, the false and worldly basis of their creed. It was on the subject of Jansenism that the Jesuits had declared themselves, and had come forth in the arena of argument. The pious wits of Port-Royal seized the opportunity, took up a cause sufficiently absurd in its fundamental dogmas, but which they were enabled to support by battering the still more absurd outworks of the Jesuits. The latter won the pope to their side, and obtained from the head of the church a condemnation of the tenets of Jansenius. The polemic writers of Port-Royal bowed to his holiness, confessed that he was infallible as a high priest, in condemning such and such belief, but most fallible as a critic, since not one of these propositions, so lustily condemned, were to be found in Jansenius. This ingenius effrontery succeeded; for, under colour of disputing about such abstractions, Pascal and Arnauld attacked their enemies in more vulnerable points — in their moral laxity, their sophistic logic, their worldliness, courtliness, and servility. Louis XIV took the Jesuit side. Many of the courtiers, who dared no longer draw the sword in rebellion, ventured to move the tongue, and exercise thought at least in independence. Amongst the most distinguished sectaries of Port-Royal was the duchess de Longueville, sister of Condé, the famous partisan of the Fronde, and mistress of La Rochefoucauld. Her hôtel, once the resort of the coadjutor [de Retz] and his party, of the hot cavaliers that drove the court from Paris, was now the lurking-place and concealment of the Jansenists. She braved the royal authority at all times, whether in the cause of the noblesse or of religion; gallant and dissolute in the Fronde, in Jansenism rigid and devout. "She was Jansenist in truth and heart," says Brienne, "just as she had indulged her gallantries with the same sincerity, and always drums beating" (the expression means openly and boldly): "a princess of the blood need fear nothing; and Madame de Longueville marched on her way with head erect." Although the Jansenism of Pascal and of Arnauld was the protestation of reason, common sense, and deep religious feeling, against the corruptions of the Jesuits, that of Madame de Longueville and her class must be considered as a kind of covert opposition to the court, and to the despotic will of the sovereign. The froward love of independence, that could no longer

exercise itself in political intrigue, found more harmless vent in criticism and polemics.[k]

The outcome of the Jansenist disputes was that in 1709 the king caused the buildings of Port-Royal des Champs to be levelled to the ground.[1] The bodies of the inoffensive solitaires were disinterred, and dogs were seen quarrelling over them.



CANNON USED IN THE TIME OF LOUIS XIV

THE POLICE

The police was the creation of Louis XIV. In 1687 he appointed a magistrate to oversee the Paris police, Nicholas de la Reynie, who was succeeded in 1697 by the marquis d'Argenson — these were the first two *lieutenants de police*. They established order, decency, and security in the city. Now commenced the system of public lighting; from the 1st of November to the 1st of March, lanterns, burning candles, were placed at the ends and in the middle of every street. There were five thousand of these lights in Paris. The watch was augmented and reorganised. Firemen replaced the Capuchins in the fire service. The narrow streets, often cut up and always filthy, were cleaned, widened, and paved; coaches and cabs for the public were introduced; Pascal even devised the omnibuses, which did not succeed at that time. The custom of going about Paris on horseback was no longer kept up except by a few obstinate representatives of the olden times.

The police attended to other things; it censured all writings,[2] it held up the post, and read in what was afterwards called the *cabinet noir*, all suspected correspondence, and to relieve the government of too slow methods of justice it multiplied the *lettres de cachet*[3] which removed all guarantee of

[1] In 1669 the sister house of Port-Royal de Paris was placed under Jesuit management. It was to this house that Clement XI ordered the transference of the property of Port-Royal des Champs, the year before the buildings were destroyed. The aged sisters were dispersed.

[2] In 1694 a printer and a publisher were hanged for libel, by sentence of De la Reynie. Several persons were interrogated or died in the Bastille for the same reason. The author of the pamphlet against the archbishop of Rheims was imprisoned in an iron cage at Mont St. Michel.

[3] These were letters written by order of the king, countersigned by a secretary of state, and sealed with the king's seal, by virtue of which the police arrested a citizen, and imprisoned him without trial, as long as it pleased the government, without his being seen or allowed to receive letters from anyone.

personal liberty to citizens. The new power charged with the overseeing of persons and opinions, thus became like an ever-open eye, always defiant of royalty. Thus were all the orders of state, all the existing authorities, all the conditions — parliament, nobility, bourgeois, clergy, and dissenters — reduced and dominated. Vauban, Catinat, and Fénelon resisted the contagion. Condé himself, in spite of his rank, his services, and his spirit, became a courtier. Turenne alone managed to keep a position from which he could tell the king many truths which others dared not repeat.[c]

THE COURT OF THE GRAND MONARCH

Louis XIV put so much brilliancy and magnificence into his court that the smallest details of its life seem interesting to posterity, to such an extent were they an object of curiosity to all the courts of Europe and to all his contemporaries. The splendour of his government shone on his pettiest actions.

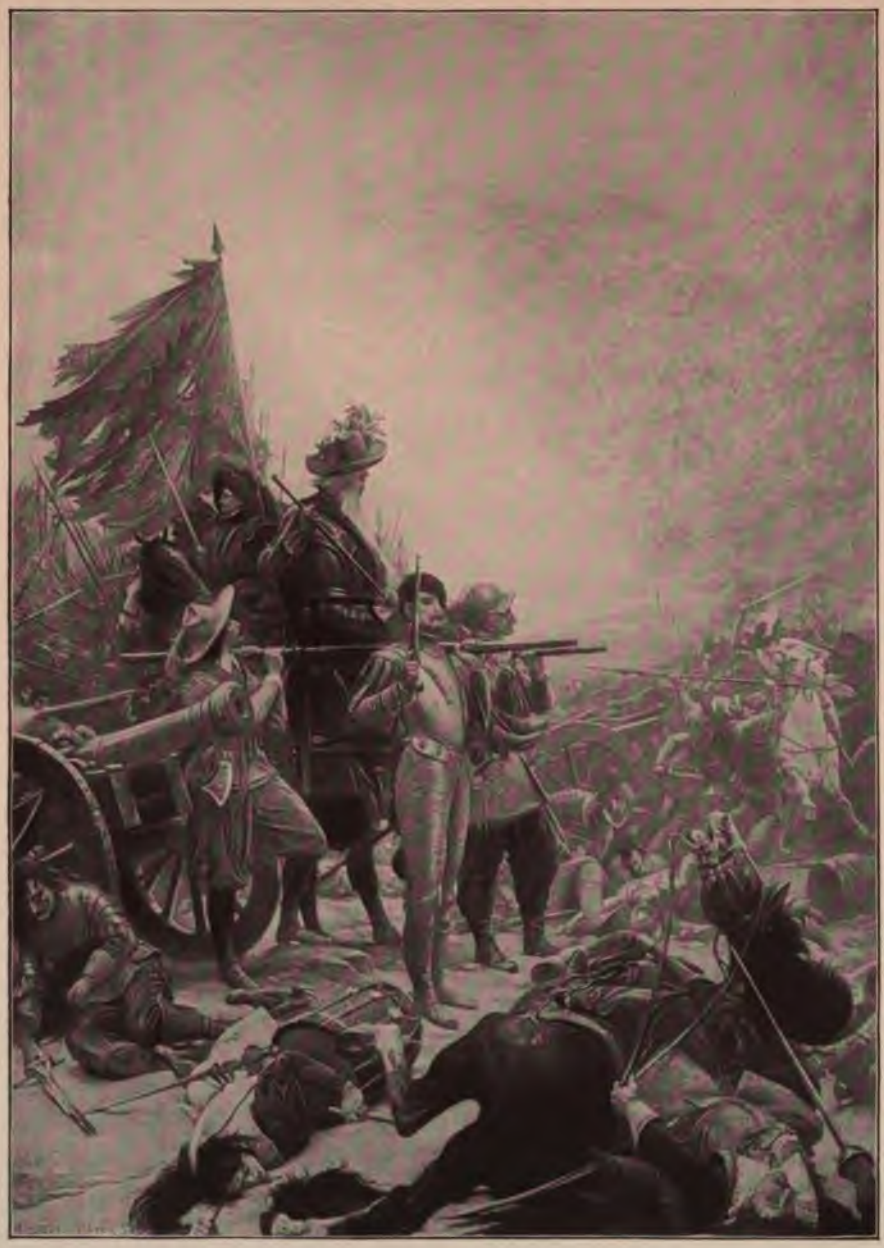
That is why no historian has failed to write of the early affections of Louis XIV for the baroness de Beauvais, for Mademoiselle d'Argencourt, for the niece of Cardinal Mazarin, who was married to the count de Soissons, the father of Prince Eugene, and above all for Marie Mancini, her sister, who afterwards married the constable Colonna.

The court, after the triumphant return of Mazarin after the Peace of the Pyrenees, busied itself with games, and the ballet, with comedy, which, being only new born, had not yet become an art, and with tragedy, which had become a sublime art in the hands of Pierre Corneille. A *curé* of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, who inclined to the rigorous ideas of the Jansenists, had often written to the queen against these spectacles, ever since the first years of the regency. He claimed that a person would be damned for being present at them. He even had this anathema signed by seven doctors of the Sorbonne, but the abbé de Beaumont, the king's preceptor, provided himself with more approbations of doctors, than the strict *curé* had with condemnations. He thus quieted the scruples of the queen, and, when he became archbishop of Paris, he gave his authority to the opinion he had supported as abbé.

There had been one continual succession of fêtes, entertainments, and gallantries since the marriage of the king. Interrupted by the death of Mazarin, they were redoubled on the marriage of Monsieur, brother of the king, with Henrietta of England, sister of Charles II [which took place twenty days after Mazarin's death]. After the cardinal's death the court became the centre of amusements and the model for other courts. The king prided himself on giving fêtes which should cast those of Vaux into oblivion.

The good taste of society had not yet received its full perfection at court. The queen-mother, Anne of Austria, began to be fond of retirement.[1] The reigning queen could scarcely speak French and her goodness was her only merit. The princess of England, the queen's sister-in-law, brought to court the attraction of a kindly and animated style of conversation, which was soon seconded by her reading of good works and her sure and fine taste. She perfected herself in the language, which she still wrote poorly at the time of her marriage. She inspired a fresh mental stimulus, and introduced graces and a politeness into court, of which the rest of Europe had scarcely an idea. Madame had all the wit of her brother Charles II, embellished by the charms

[1 Anne of Austria died of cancer January 20th, 1666.]



ROCROY

(From the painting by Lionel Royer.)

[See p. 489.]

of her sex, by the talent and the desire to please. The court of Louis XIV breathed forth a gallantry which a sense of propriety made more piquant. That which reigned at the court of Charles II was bolder, and too much grossness disfigured its amusements.

There was at first between Madame and the king a great deal of sprightly coquetry and a secret understanding, which was shown in little attentions often repeated.[1] The king sent her verses; she answered them. It chanced that the same man was at once the confidant of the king and of Madame in this ingenious intercourse. This was the marquis of Dangeau. He conducted the correspondence for both king and princess; thus serving both of them without letting one suspect what he was doing for the other.

Mademoiselle de la Vallière

These pastimes gave way to the more serious and more protracted passion which the king had for Mademoiselle de la Vallière, maid of honour to Madame. He experienced with her the rare pleasure of being loved solely for himself. She was for two years the hidden object of all the gallant amusements, all the entertainments which the king gave. A young *valet de chambre* of the king, named Belloc, composed several recitals which were interspersed between dances, sometimes in the queen's, sometimes in Madame's apartments, and these recitals expressed with an air of mystery the secrets of their hearts, which soon ceased to be a secret.

All these public entertainments which the king gave were so many homages to his mistress. In 1662, a tournament (*carrousel*) was held opposite the Tuileries in a large enclosure which has retained its name from this event, Place du Carrousel. There were five *quadrilles*. The king was at the head of the Romans; his brother of the Persians, the prince of Condé of the Turks, the duke d'Enghien, his son, of the Indians, the duke of Guise of the Americans.

The queen-mother, the reigning queen, the queen of England, widow of Charles I, forgetting for the moment her misfortunes, were under a dais to see this spectacle. The count de Saulx, son of the duke de Lesdiguières, took the prize and received it from the hand of the queen-mother. These fêtes reanimated more than ever the taste for devices and emblems, which tourneys had formerly made the fashion, and which had lasted after them.

In 1662, an antiquarian called D'Ouvrier designed for Louis XIV the emblem of a sun darting its rays on a globe, with the words: *Nec pluribus impar*. The idea imitated somewhat a Spanish device made for Philip II, and which was more appropriate for the Spanish king, who owned the best part of the New World and so many states in the old, than for a young king of France who as yet gave only hopes. This device had a prodigious success. The *armoires* of the king, the crown furniture, the tapestries, the carvings, were decorated with it. The king never wore it in his tournaments.

The fête of Versailles, in 1664, surpassed that of the carrousel by its

[1 Madame's husband, Philip duke of Orleans, who had assumed that title on the death of Gaston in 1660, was a man of licentious habits, and although he distinguished himself in war, as we shall see, his effeminacy was of a most marked type. There is no doubt that Monsieur was most indifferent to his wife, and many historians, including Michelet, believe that Louis XIV was the father of her children. Of these, two daughters arrived at maturity — Marie Louise, who married Charles II of Spain, and Anne Marie, who married Victor Amadeus of Savoy, afterwards king of Sardinia. Madame died 1670, under circumstances which will be related in the next chapter, and which were open to the suspicion of poison. The following year Monsieur married the princess palatine — Charlotte Elizabeth. She was the mother of the duke of Orleans, regent of the realm, and died in 1722.]

originality, by its magnificence, and by the pleasures of mind which, being joined to the splendours of these diversions, added an attraction and graces which no fête before had ever had. Versailles began to be a charming place of abode.

The 5th of May the king came there with the court, composed of six hundred persons, who, together with their suites, were entertained at his expense, as well as all those who assisted in preparing the entertainments. Nothing was ever lacking at these fêtes except buildings especially constructed for giving them, such as were raised by the Greeks and Romans. The quickness, however, with which theatres, amphitheatres, and porticoes were erected, and ornamented with as much magnificence as good taste, was a marvel which added to the illusion and which, diversified since in a thousand different ways, increased the charm of these exhibitions.



MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIÈRE
(1644–1710)

There was first a sort of tournament. Those who were to take part appeared on the first day as in a review; they were preceded by heralds at arms, by pages and equerries who carried their devices and their shields. On the shields were written verses composed by Périgni and Benserade. This latter especially had a singular talent for those gallant verses in which he always made delicate and piquant allusions to the character of the persons, to the personages of antiquity or of fable which were represented, and to the passions which animated the court. The king represented Roger; all the crown diamonds glittered on his coat and on the horse he rode. The queens and three hundred ladies, under triumphal arches, watched this entrance.

The king with all eyes fastened upon him distinguished only those of La Vallière. The fête was for her alone; she enjoyed it hidden in the crowd. The cavalcade was followed by a gilded car, 18 feet high, 15 feet wide, and 24 feet long, representing the chariot of the sun. The four ages, of gold, silver, bronze, and iron, the signs of the zodiac, the seasons, the hours, followed this car on foot. Everything was in character. Shepherds carried pieces of the barrier which were adjusted to the sound of trumpets, followed at intervals by bagpipes and violins. Certain persons who followed Apollo's car came first to the queens to recite verses appropriate to the place and time, to the king and the ladies. When the races were finished and night was come, four thousand great torches lit up the space wherein fêtes were given. Tables were served by two hundred persons, representing the seasons, fauns, sylvan creatures, dryads, together with shepherds, vintagers, harvesters. Pan and Diana advanced on a moving mountain from which

they descended to place on tables the most delicious products of field and forest. Behind these tables in the half circle, a theatre filled with performers arose. The arcades which surrounded the tables and theatre were ornamented with five hundred green and silver chandeliers, holding candles; a gilded balustrade shut in this vast enclosure. These fêtes, so far superior to those invented in romances, lasted for seven days. The king carried off the prize of the games four times, and then let other cavaliers contest for the prizes he had gained, which he abandoned to them. The comedy of the *Princesse d'Élide*, although not one of Molière's best, was one of the most agreeable attractions of these entertainments, on account of an infinity of fine allegories on the customs of the times and by the apposite observations which form an agreeable feature of such entertainments, but which lose their point for posterity.

The chief glory of these entertainments, which in France perfected good taste, good form, and talent, came from the fact that they detracted nothing from the continual labours of the monarch. Without these labours he would have been able only to hold a court, he would not have known how to reign; and if the magnificent amusements of this court had increased the misery of the people, they would have been only odious; but the same man who had given these fêtes had also given the people bread in the famine of 1662. He caused grain to be brought, which the rich bought at a low price, and which he gave to poor families at the gate of the Louvre. He had returned three millions of taxes to the people; no part of the interior administration had been neglected.[b] Yet it cannot be overlooked that bad economics underlay most of these financial measures,—as, indeed, of all Colbert's work.[a]

The legate Chigi, sent by Pope Alexander VII, arrived at Versailles in the midst of all these enjoyments to render satisfaction to the king for the assault of the papal guards.[b] This attack had taken place on August 20th, 1662, at Rome. It precipitated a quarrel very similar to that which had taken place in London the preceding year. The liveried servants of the duke de Créqui, the ambassador, had a fight with the Corsican guard; one of them was killed, the duke was insulted and his coach fired upon. Louis XIV demanded reparation. The court of Rome attempted, according to the custom of the times, to gain time; the king insisted, sent the papal nuncio to the frontier under escort, occupied the county of Venaissin, sent troops into the duchies of Parma and Modena in Italy, and finally threatened war. Alexander VII, seeing that these menaces were serious, gave in (1664). His own brother, the legate Fabio Chigi, brought in person the desired satisfaction. Louis XIV then gave back Avignon and Venaissin.[c] This visit of the papal delegate revealed to the court a new spectacle. The grand ceremonies were fêtes for the public. The honours paid him made the satisfaction more brilliant. Seated under a dais, he received the greetings of the superior courts, of the municipal courts, and of the clergy. He entered Paris to the sound of cannon, having the great Condé at his right and the son of that prince at his left; and in this manner he came to humiliate himself, Rome, and the pope, before a king who had not yet drawn a sword. After the audience he dined with Louis XIV, and the chief thought of all was to treat him magnificently and give him pleasure.

All this gave to the court of Louis XIV an air of grandeur which affected all the other courts of Europe. The king wanted this *éclat*, which was attached to his person, to reflect on all that surrounded him. To distinguish his principal courtiers he invented blue cassocks embroidered with

gold and silver. The permission to wear them was a great favour to men influenced chiefly by vanity. They were sought after almost like the collars of the order. We may mention here, since we are speaking of details, that it was the fashion then to wear cassocks over a doublet ornamented with ribbons, and over this cassock passed a shoulder band to which the sword was attached. A kind of lace band was worn around the neck and on the head a hat decorated with two rows of feathers. This fashion, which lasted until 1684, became that of all Europe with the exception of Spain and Poland. Almost everywhere people prided themselves on imitating the court of Louis XIV.

Louis established order in his household, regulated ranks and factions, and created new offices in connection with his person, such as that of the grand-master of his wardrobe. He re-established the tables instituted by Francis I, and augmented them. There were twelve for the officers of the king's household, which were served with as much niceness and profusion as those of many sovereigns. He wanted all strangers to be invited to them, and this attention lasted during all his reign. There was another attention which was even more select and polite. When he had the pavilions of Marly built in 1679, all the ladies found a complete toilet-set in their apartments; nothing which belonged to commodious luxury was forgotten. Whoever was on a journey could give repasts in his apartments, and was served there with the same delicacy as the master. These little things acquire value only when they are sustained by greater ones. In everything which the king did might be seen splendour and generosity. He made a present of 200,000 francs to the daughters of his ministers on their marriage.

One can easily imagine the effect which this magnificence had in Europe. The French were not the only ones who praised him: twelve panegyrics were pronounced on Louis XIV in different towns of Italy — an homage rendered neither from fear nor hope of favour, which the marquis Zampieri sent to the king.

He continued to extend his patronage to letters and to the arts. Proofs of this are the particular gratuities of about 4,000 livres to Racine, the fortune of Despréaux, that of Quinault, and above all that of Lully and of all the artists who consecrated their work to him. The king danced in ballets until the year 1670. He was then thirty-two years old. The tragedy of *Britannicus* was played before him at St. Germain; he was struck by these verses:

Pour mérite premier, pour vertu singulière,
Il excelle à traîner un char dans la carrière,
A disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
A se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains.

After that he never again danced in public: the poet had reformed the monarch. His union with La Vallière still continued in spite of his frequent infidelities to her. These infidelities cost him little trouble. He never found women who resisted him, and he always came back to the one who, by the sweetness and goodness of her character, by her sincere affection, and even by the chains of habit, had subjugated him without the aid of art. But beginning with the year 1669, La Vallière perceived that Madame de Montespan was gaining the ascendency; she fought against it with her usual sweetness; she supported for a long time, and almost without complaining, the pain of being the witness of her rival's triumph; she still thought herself happy in being even thought of by the king, whom she continued to love, and in seeing him without being loved by him.

[1670–1675 A.D.]

Finally in 1675 she embraced the resource of tender souls, which need deep and intense sentiments to subjugate them. She thought that God alone could succeed her lover in her heart. Her conversion became just as celebrated as her affection. She became a Carmelite at Paris and persevered in her resolve. To wear haircloth, to walk with bare feet, to fast rigorously, to sing at night in chorus in an unknown tongue — all this did not repulse the delicacy of a woman accustomed to so much glory, luxury, and pleasure. She lived this austere life from 1675 to 1710, under the simple name of Louise de la Miséricorde.

It is known that when Sister Louise de la Miséricorde was told of the death of the duke de Vermandois, whom she had borne to the king, she said: "I ought to weep for his birth more than for his death." One daughter was left to her, who resembled the king the most of all his children. She married the prince Armand de Conti, nephew of the Great Condé.

Madame de Montespan

In the meantime the marquise de Montespan was enjoying the king's favour with much *éclat* and authority. Athénaïs de Mortemar, wife of the marquis de Montespan, her elder sister the marquise de Thiange, and her younger sister, for whom she obtained the abbey of Fontevrault, were the most beautiful women of their day, and all three joined to this distinction singular attractions of mind. The duke de Vivonne, their brother, and marshal of France, was also one of the men at court who had the most good taste and was best read. It was to him that the king said one day: "But what is the good of reading?" The duke de Vivonne, who was stout and red faced, answered: "Reading does for the mind what your partridges do to my cheeks."



MADAME DE MONTESPAN
(1641–1707)

These four persons were universally popular by a singular style of conversation mingled with pleasantry, naïveté, and wit, which was known as *l'esprit de Mortemar*. They all wrote with an ease and grace peculiar to them.

Madame de Montespan's triumph burst forth during a journey which the king made to Flanders in 1670. The ruin of the Dutch was prepared on this journey in the midst of entertainments. It was a continual fête, accompanied with great pomp. The king, who made all his war expeditions on horseback, made this one for the first time in a closed carriage. Postchaises had not yet been invented. The queen, Madame, her sister-in-law, and the marquise de Montespan were in this superb equipage, followed by many others, and when Madame de Montespan was alone she had four

bodyguards at the doors of her carriage. The dauphin came next with his court. Mademoiselle with hers; it was before the fatal event of her marriage; she took part in all these triumphs in peace and saw with complaisance her lover, the king's favourite, at the head of his company of guards. The most beautiful crown furniture was carried to the towns where they slept. In every city they found a masked or dress ball, or fireworks. All his military retinue accompanied the king and all his household retinue followed or preceded him. The tables were kept as at St. Germain. In this pomp the court visited all the conquered cities. The principal ladies of Brussels, of Ghent came to see this magnificence. The king invited them to his table. He made them very handsome presents. All the officers of the garrison troops received gratuities. His liberality cost the king several times fifteen hundred gold louis a day.

All the honour, all the homage was for Madame de Montespan, except what duty gave to the queen. Nevertheless this lady did not share the secrets of state. The king knew how to distinguish affairs of state from pleasure. The unfortunate experience of a maid of honour to the queen in 1673 gave rise to a new court order. The danger attached to the position of a young girl in a gallant and voluptuous court caused twelve ladies of the palace to be substituted for the twelve maids of honour, who had graced the court and the queen's presence. After that the queens' households were composed in that manner. This arrangement made the court larger and more magnificent, by establishing in it the husbands and families of these ladies, which increased the society and spread greater opulence.

Poisoning: The Brinvilliers Case

About 1670 the crime of poisoning began to be prevalent in France. This revenge of cowards had not been employed during the horrors of the civil war, but, by a singular fatality, had infected France in the time of glory and of the pleasures which softened manners, even as it found its way into ancient Rome in the fairest days of the republic.

Two Italians, one of whom bore the name of Exili, worked for a long time with a German apothecary called Glaser, in quest of the philosopher's stone. In this enterprise the two Italians lost the little they had and endeavoured, by crime, to repair the harm done by their folly; they secretly sold poisons. Confession, the greatest curb to human wickedness but which is abused in the idea that one may perform the crimes one is sure of expiating, was the means of informing the grand penitentiary of Paris that certain persons had died of poison; he apprised the government. The two Italians were suspected, and put in the Bastille; one of the two died there; Exili remained there without being convicted; and from the depths of his prison he spread through Paris those dark secrets which cost the lives of the civil lieutenant D'Aubrai and his family, and which finally led to the establishment of the Chamber of Poisons, called the *Chambre Ardente*.

Love was the prime source of these horrible tragedies. The marquis of Brinvilliers, son-in-law of the civil lieutenant D'Aubrai, had in his house Sainte-Croix, the captain of his regiment, a man with too handsome a face: his wife warned him of the consequences; the husband persisted in letting the young man remain in the house with his wife, a young, beautiful, and susceptible woman. What might have been expected happened: they fell in love with each other. The civil lieutenant, father of the marquise, was harsh and imprudent enough to solicit a *lettre de cachet* and get the captain, who

[1670-1685 A.D.]

needed only to be returned to his regiment, sent to the Bastille. Sainte-Croix was unfortunately put in a room with Exili : this Italian taught him how to revenge himself ; the results make one shudder. The marquise did not attempt the life of her husband, who had had some indulgence for a love of which he was himself the cause, but the fury of her vengeance induced her to poison her father, her two brothers, and her sister. Amidst so many crimes she was religious ; she often went to confession, and when she was arrested at Liège a general confession was even found written in her handwriting, which served not as a proof against her but as presumptive evidence. It is not true that she tried her poisons in the hospitals as the people said, and as written in the *Causes célèbres*, the work of a briefless barrister (François Gabot de Pitaval) and made for the people ; but it is true that she as well as Sainte-Croix had secret connections with persons afterwards accused of the same crimes. She was burned in 1676 after having had her head cut off. But from 1670, when Exili had begun to make poisons, down to 1680 this crime infected Paris. It cannot be concealed that Penautier, the receiver-general of the clergy and a friend of this woman, was accused some time afterwards of having put his secrets in practice and that it cost him half his wealth to suppress the indictment.

The Bavarian princess, wife of Monseigneur,[1] at first added brilliancy and vivacity to this court. The marquise de Montespan still attracted the principal attention but finally she ceased to please, and the violent transports of her grief did not bring back a heart that was forsaking her. However, she still kept her place at court, through her high position, being superintendent of the queen's household, and with the king through habit and through her authority. The youth and beauty of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, a son she had borne to the king in 1680, the title of duchess she had received, kept Madame de Maintenon away from the first place, to which she did not then dare to aspire but which she afterwards obtained. The duchess de Fontanges, however, and her son died in 1681.

The marquise de Montespan, although she no longer had an open rival, none the less did not possess the heart tired of her and of her complaints. When men are no longer in their youth they almost all have need of the society of an agreeable woman. Above all the weight of affairs makes this consolation necessary. The new favourite, Madame de Maintenon, who felt the secret power she was gaining every day, bore herself with that art so natural to women and which is never displeasing to men. She wrote one day to Madame de Frontenac, her cousin, in whom she placed an entire confidence : "I always send him away dissatisfied but never discouraged." During this time, when her favour was increasing and Madame de Montespan was nearing her fall, these two rivals saw each other every day, now with a secret bitterness, now with a passing confidence which the necessity of speaking to each other and the weariness of constraint sometimes put into their interviews. They agreed to write, each from her point of view, memoirs of all that happened at court. The work never went very far. Madame de Montespan took pleasure in reading selections from these memoirs to her friends, in the last years of her life. The pious devotion which was joined to all these secret intrigues further strengthened the favour of Madame de Maintenon and weakened that of Madame de Montespan. The king reproached himself for his attachment to a married woman and felt this scruple still more since he

[1 By this title was known the "grand dauphin" Louis, only child of Louis XIV and his queen, born in 1661. The dauphin married in 1680 the princess Marie Anne Christine Victoire of Bavaria.]

had begun to feel no more love for her. This embarrassing situation continued until 1685, a year made memorable by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Very different scenes were to be seen at that time — on one side the despair and flight of a part of the nation, on the other new fêtes at Versailles; Trianon and Marly built; nature in all these places forced with delights, and gardens in which every art was exhausted. The marriage of the grandson of the Great Condé with Mademoiselle de Nantes, daughter of the king and Madame de Montespan, was the last triumph of this mistress who began to retire from court.

The Retirement of Montespan

The king afterwards gave in marriage two other children he had had by her: Mademoiselle de Blois to the duke de Chartres, and the duke du Maine to Louise Bénédicte de Bourbon, granddaughter of the Great Condé and sister of Monsieur le Duc,[1] a princess celebrated for her wit and liking for the arts.

Before the celebration of the marriage of Monsieur le Duc with Mademoiselle de Nantes, the marquis de Seignelay in honour of that event gave the king a fête worthy of that monarch in the gardens of Sceaux, which had been planted by Le Nôtre with as much taste as those of Versailles. The idyll of Peace composed by Racine was performed on that occasion. At Versailles there was a new tournament and after the marriage the king displayed a singular magnificence, for which Cardinal Mazarin had given the first idea in 1656.

Four booths were put up in the salon at Marly, filled with the richest and most select products of the industry of Parisian workmen. These four booths were at the same time so many splendid decorations representing the four seasons of the year. Madame de Montespan presided over one with Monseigneur. Her rival, Madame de Maintenon, was in another with the duke du Maine. The newly married couple each had charge of one: Monsieur le Duc with Madame de Thiange; and Madame la Duchesse, whom propriety did not permit to have one with a man on account of her extreme youth, was with the duchess de Chevreuse. The so-called gentlemen and ladies *du voyage* drew lots for the jewels with which the booths were decorated. The king then made presents to the whole court in a manner worthy of a king. Cardinal Mazarin's lottery was less ingenious and less brilliant. These lotteries had been formerly put into fashion by the Roman emperors, but not one of them ever relieved its magnificence with so much gallantry.

After the marriage of her daughter Madame de Montespan did not again appear at court. She lived a very dignified life at Paris. She had a large income, but it was a life annuity, and the king always paid her a pension of 1,000 gold louis a month. She went every year to take the waters at Bourbon, and there married off the girls of the neighbourhood, whom she endowed. She was no longer at the age when the imagination, affected by lively impressions, sends one to the Carmelites. She died at Bourbon in 1707.

One year after the marriage of Mademoiselle de Nantes with Monsieur le Duc, the prince of Condé died at Fontainebleau, at the age of sixty-six, of an illness which was hastened by his desire to go to see Madame la Duchesse, who had smallpox.

[1 Louis de Bourbon-Condé, who was the father of Louis XV's prime minister.]

[1686 A.D.]

Madame de Maintenon

Meanwhile, after the marriage of Madame la Duchesse, after the total eclipse of the mother, the victorious Madame de Maintenon achieved such an influence and inspired Louis XIV with so much tenderness and such scruples, that the king, by the advice of Père Lachaise, married her secretly in the month of January, 1686,[1] in the small chapel in the apartments occupied afterwards by the duke of Burgundy. There was no contract, no stipulation. The archbishop of Paris, Harlay de Chanvalon, pronounced the benediction, the confessor assisting. Montchevreuil and Bontemps, first valet de chambre, were the witnesses. Louis XIV was at the time in his forty-eighth year and the woman he espoused in her fifty-second. This sovereign, crowned with glory, desired to combine with the fatigues of governing the innocent joys of private life; this marriage bound him to nothing incompatible with his rank; it was always a problem to the court. Since Madame de Maintenon was really married, it respected her as the king's choice, without treating her as queen.



MADAME DE MAINTENON
(1635–1719)

She was of an old family, granddaughter of Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné, gentleman of the chamber to Henry IV. His father, Constant d'Aubigné, wishing to establish himself in business in the Carolinas, applied to the English government, and was thrown into the prison of the château Trompette, from which he escaped with the assistance of the daughter of the governor of the prison, a gentleman from Bordeaux named Cadillac. Constant d'Aubigné married his benefactress in 1627 and took her with him to the Carolinas. Returning with her to France after several years, both were imprisoned at Niort in Poitou, by order of the court. In this prison was born, in 1635, Françoise d'Aubigné, destined to know all the greatest hardships of life as well as the highest favours of fortune. Taken at the age of three to America (Martinique), brought back an orphan of twelve years, brought up with the greatest severity by Madame de Neuillant, mother of the duchess de Navailles her relative, she was only too glad to marry in 1651 Paul Scarron, who lived near her in the rue d'Enfer. Scarron came of an old family of parliament, distinguished by its important matrimonial alliances; but his profession of burlesque poet lowered him while making him popular. It was nevertheless a stroke of fortune for Mademoiselle d'Aubigné to marry this man, deformed in mind and body, and with very modest means. She abjured Calvinism, her own religion as well as that of her ancestors, before

[1 The queen Maria Theresa had died July 30th, 1683, quite suddenly. She held so little place at court that the event was scarcely noticed.*e*]

this marriage. Her beauty and wit soon made her distinguished. She was eagerly sought after by the best society of Paris, and this time of her youth was no doubt the happiest period of her life. After the death of her husband, in 1660, she was for a long time unable to obtain from the king a modest pension of 1,500 livres which Scarron had enjoyed. Finally, after several years, the king granted her one of two thousand, saying, "Madame, I have made you wait a long time, but you have so many friends that my only distinction could be in not being one of them." Meanwhile it is proved, by the letters of Madame de Maintenon, that she owed to Madame de Montespan the slight assistance she received to relieve her poverty. It was remembered several years later, when it became necessary to bring up secretly the duke du Maine, son of the king by the marquise de Montespan, born in 1672. The duke du Maine was born with a deformed foot. The chief physician, D'Aquin, who was in the secret, decided that the child should be taken to the baths at Barèges. It was necessary to find a confidential person to be intrusted with this charge. The king suggested Madame Scarron. Louvois went secretly to Paris to propose this journey to her. From that time on she was in charge of the education of the duke du Maine — chosen for this duty by the king and not by Madame de Montespan, as has erroneously been said.

She wrote directly to the king; her letters pleased him greatly. This was the origin of her good fortune — her shrewdness did the rest. The king, who at first did not like her, passed from aversion to confidence and from confidence to love. The letters which we have of hers are of much greater importance than they would seem: they show that mixture of religion and gallantry, of dignity and weakness, which are often found in the human heart, and which certainly were in that of Louis XIV. Madame de Maintenon seemed to be filled at the same time with an ambition and a devoutness which never appeared to conflict. Her confessor, Gobelin, approved equally of both: he was spiritual guide as well as courtier; his penitent, having become ungrateful towards Madame de Montespan, always dissembled this feeling. Her confessor encouraged her in her aspirations. She called religion to the assistance of her waning charms to supplant her benefactress, now become her rival.

This strange mixture of love and scruple on the part of the king, of ambition and devoutness on the part of the new mistress, seemed to have lasted from 1681 to 1686, the date of their marriage. Her elevation was for her only a seclusion. Shut up in her apartments, which were on the same floor as those of the king, she limited herself to the society of two or three ladies, retiring like herself — she saw even them very rarely. The king came to her apartments every day after supper, and remained until midnight. There he worked with his ministers, while Madame de Maintenon read, or occupied herself with needlework; she never attempted to speak on affairs of state, seemed often to ignore them, putting far from her any appearance of intrigue or plotting; much more occupied in humouring him who governed than seeking to govern, in managing her income, and expending it with the greatest cautiousness.

Louis XIV in marrying Madame de Maintenon gained only an agreeable and submissive companion. The sole public distinction which testified to her secret elevation was, that during mass she occupied one of those small gilded stalls which were supposed to be only for the king and queen. Beyond that, no display, no grandeur. The devoutness with which she had inspired the king and which had led to her marriage, became gradually a true and profound sentiment, which age and ennui served to strengthen. She already

posed at the court and before the king as a foundress by gathering together at Noisy several young girls of the nobility; and the king had already set apart the revenues of the abbey of St. Denis for that budding community. St. Cyr was built at the foot of the park of Versailles in 1686.

On the death of the king she retired for life to St. Cyr. What is surprising, is that the king left her almost nothing. He simply recommended her to the duke of Orleans. She asked for a pension of only 24,000 livres, which was scrupulously paid her, until her death on April 15th, 1719.[b]

Turning now from this survey of the court, let us examine the effect of Louis XIV's policy on the nation at large.

EFFECT OF LOUIS XIV'S POLICY ON THE NATION

Louis XIV's reign falls into two parts, easy to distinguish, the one from the other; the first covers from 1661 to 1683, the second, and much the longer, from 1683 to 1715. In the first period, Louis XIV found four men of genius, who were also scrupulously honest men, to uphold and even direct him in everything concerning the internal government, diplomacy, warfare, and defence of the kingdom. In an equal degree Colbert, Lionne, Turenne, and Vauban exercised a salutary and fruitful influence over the king's mind, never divorcing the welfare of the kingdom from that of the king, and seeking before all else the greatness or the security of the empire by adopting the best of the measures which had proved so successful under Henry IV, Richelieu, and Mazarin. The profound reverence which Colbert, more especially, had for the memory of Richelieu, whom he wished the king to take as his model, provoked Louis' jests. "When any important matter was under discussion," says a contemporary chronicle, "the late king would often exclaim, 'Colbert there will tell us: Sire, the great Cardinal Richelieu.' Which, however, did not prevent Colbert from pursuing his object, and moulding the king in Richelieu's likeness."

In the second period, Louis, prematurely aged, disillusioned, and ill, reduced to a stern performance of his duties as a man and a Christian by the froward influence of an obstinate and ambitious woman, drew inspiration from none but narrow ideals, applying the most fatal maxims to home government and foreign policy. He yielded to the advice of persons whom he had for long encouraged to flatter his prejudices, and who urged him along a path of bloody repressions. Louvois, Madame de Maintenon, Chamillard, and Villeroi were the real wielders of authority. They sacrificed the well-being of the kingdom to their own interest, which they sought to confound with the interests of the crown. They prepared the way for the ruin of the state by the most disastrous home measures, while they ruined the prestige of France abroad by changing the character of her policy.[m]

The trouble was not only in the royal household; it also threatened to be in the state; for Louis, violating all laws civil and religious, placed the legitimated princes side by side with the princes of the blood. He forced the court to pay equal respect to both; and public morality received a blow from which it was slow to recover. The lessons in scandal which came from the throne were not lost, and the corruption, which was fermenting in spite of the apparent austerity of the last years, was to break out under the new reign without restraint and without shame. Those dukes of Orleans and Vendôme, given up to filthy debauches, that duke d'Antin surprised in a flagrant act of theft, and so many others who contrived at play to correct the chances of fortune; those princesses of the blood who at Marly

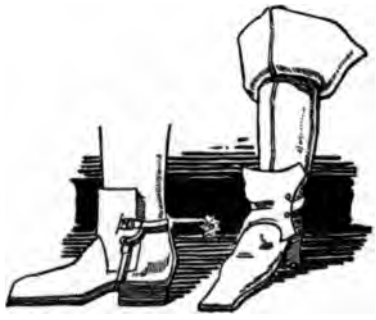
within two steps of the king and Madame de Maintenon, send for such strange pastimes[1] — that court in fine which, according to Saint-Simon,[f] "sweated hypocrisy," all shows, under a king who plays the devotee, when he is no longer able to do otherwise, that human morality, conscience, and dignity can never be violated with impunity. Already, even in the very heart of Versailles, a premonitory cry is heard. In face of these gilded lives La Bruyère writes: "The great have no soul; I would be of the people." It was at Versailles that the French nobility ruined themselves. There official ennui led to secret debauches; the habit of receiving everything from the monarch led to the belief that all was due not to services but to servility.

One irrefutable witness of the wretchedness of this period has been left to us — the memorials which the king demanded of the intendants on the condition of their provinces in order that his grandson the duke of Burgundy might by studying them become acquainted with the affairs of the administration. At every page these distressing words recur, "War, mortality, the continual quartering and passage of the soldiers, the militia, the great prerogatives, the withdrawal of the Huguenots have ruined this country." Bridges, roads were in a deplorable state and commerce was annihilated. The frontier provinces were further crushed by requisitions and the pillage of the soldiers who, receiving neither pay nor food, helped themselves. In the generality of Rouen, out of 700,000 inhabitants 650,000 had a bundle of straw for their beds. In certain provinces the peasant was returning to a state of savagery: living for the most part on herbs and roots like the beasts; and, wild as they were, he fled if one approached. "There is no nation more savage than these people," the intendant of Bourges says of those under his administration; "sometimes troops of them are to be seen in the country, seated in a circle in the middle of a field and always far from the roads; if one approach the band immediately disperses."[c]

We have seen Louis XIV at home; let us now turn to his relations with other countries.[a]

[1] Monseigneur played late in the salon. On withdrawing to his own apartments he went up to the princesses (the duchesses de Chartres and de Bourbon) and found them smoking with pipes which they had sent for from the Swiss guardhouse. Monseigneur made them stop this diversion, but the smoke betrayed them. Next morning the king administered a rough rebuke.[i]

The duchess de la Ferté assembled her purveyors at her house and played a kind of lansquenet with them. She whispered in my ear, "I cheat them but they rob me." *Mémoires* of Madame de Staal.[o]





CHAPTER XX

LOUIS XIV, SPAIN, AND HOLLAND

[1661–1679 A.D.]

I doubt whether any human being ever enjoyed, in greater perfection, the blessing of nerves toned to habitual energy, and exempt from all morbid sensitiveness. Heat, cold, pain, fatigue, and hunger seemed to have no power over him. Not only his delicate courtiers but his hardy veterans admired the stoicism of their invulnerable king; and his mental composure was on a level with his bodily hardihood. No provocation could excite him to unseemly anger, and no calamity could depress him to unmanly dejection. If he was often the victim, he was never the slave of appetite or passion. Though constantly exposed to the allurements of the most exquisite flattery, and the most fascinating caresses, he never yielded himself to the guidance of any favourite, male or female; but adhered, with immutable constancy and calmness, to the ministers whom he had either trained or chosen. — STEPHEN.[1]

THE foreign situation in 1661 was most favourable. If it was necessary to wind up the affairs of Mazarin, all that had to be done abroad was to gather the fruits and enjoy the glory acquired. Europe was basking in a peace so profound that not a cloud seemed to threaten it. The powers were all occupied in reorganising their forces, some like England in reconstructing their government. Louis XIV was one of the freest of sovereigns; he was the most powerful, thanks to Mazarin; and he became the wealthiest, thanks to Colbert.

He desired them to preserve peace and give no offence to Europe. Nevertheless he had inherited from Mazarin a fixed plan, and certain projects in harmony with the spirit of his government. His ambition was to invalidate the renunciation of Maria Theresa, in such a manner as to create a right for himself or his sons to the Spanish succession, or at least to the Netherlands.[1]

He charged the archbishop of Embrun, his ambassador at Madrid, to

[1 See Volumes X and XIII.]

demand that the renunciation be revoked. He maintained that it was not *ipso facto*, the infanta not having renounced her rights and the court of Spain having itself thus decided; that in all respects it had failed to obtain the necessary ratification; finally that the condition on which it had been made, the payment of a dowry of 500,000 crowns, had not been complied with. He offered, in case his plea was accepted, to ally himself the more closely with Spain, and even abandon all claims to Portugal in her favour; but Philip and his ministers eluded the question and refused to give an opinion.

During the negotiations a serious affair occurred in London, where the baron de Vatteville, the Spanish ambassador, claimed precedence over the count d'Estrades, the ambassador of France. On October 8th, 1661, the Swedish envoy, the count de Brahé, was to be presented to the king of England. As the procession was about to start, D'Estrades tried to make his coach pass first, and a troop of armed men under orders from Vatteville stopped it. The Londoners took the part of the Spaniards; there was a fight — some were killed and wounded. In the end the French were obliged to retire.[b]

At this news Louis XIV ordered the Spanish ambassador to leave France, and the French ambassador to Spain to demand the punishment of Vatteville and a reparation which should make such affairs henceforth impossible.[c]

Philip IV granted this without much difficulty. Vatteville was recalled; and March 22nd, 1662, the marquis de Fuentes declared at the Louvre before the assembled court that the Spanish envoys would claim no precedence over those of France, except at the court of Vienna where they had long been accustomed to occupy the first place on account of the close ties which united the two branches of the house of Austria.

Meanwhile Spain still refused to recognise the rights of the infanta, and Louis XIV continued to uphold the Portuguese;[1] he even assisted in bringing about the marriage of Charles of England to a princess of the house of Braganza, who received Tangier, Bombay, and a considerable sum as dowry. Charles II sought, as did Cromwell, to develop English commerce and the navy, but he was needy, extravagant, and he feared the parsimony of parliament. Louis XIV advanced him money in secret and offered to buy back Dunkirk and Mardyck.[2] The bargain was concluded November 27th, 1662, and France recovered the two towns which Mazarin had turned over to Cromwell with regret.

By this acquisition Louis XIV took a first step towards the Netherlands, the object of his whole ambition. He awaited the moment when the question of Philip IV's successor should be opened to uphold the rights of the infanta in the Belgian provinces, even though the determination of these rights was still a matter of debate. He wavered between the desire to reunite the major part of the Spanish Netherlands to France, giving the rest to Holland, or to occupy only a few places and erect the ten Belgian provinces into a republic or a neutral state. The latter plan was the less brilliant, but the easiest to carry out; and a state thus constituted would oppose a barrier to foreign invasion. Louis XIV negotiated in secret to obtain the eventual concurrence of Holland in his plans, but in spite of the efforts of the grand pensionary, the celebrated Jan de Witt, he could not obtain this. The Dutch understood too well that a Belgian republic would be dependent on Louis and would not oppose his ambitions.[b] Besides this the Dutch had

[1] Richelieu's interference in Portuguese affairs will be recalled.]
[2] The price paid was five millions.]

a cause for complaint in the tax of 50 sous a ton, placed by Fouquet in 1659, upon foreign ships trading in French ports. After long debates this tax was reduced by half for Dutch ships and a defensive and commercial treaty was signed in 1662 in which France and Holland agreed to protect each other's rights on land and sea.[a]

The duchies of Lorraine and Bar had been returned to Duke Charles IV in 1661 only on condition that he would not rebuild the ramparts of the towns, that he would only maintain one fortress, Marsal, and that French troops should have the right of passing through his territory. These conditions were not fulfilled. Louis lost patience and sent an army corps to Marsal. The duke bent before the necessity, and gave up Marsal on condition that he might hold the rest of his estates according to the terms of the treaty of 1661.[c]

Louis, admirably counselled by Lionne, took care in preparing the execution of his designs against the Netherlands not to arouse the defiance of Europe. He managed only ostensibly to sustain the Portuguese; simply authorising them to take into their service Marshal de Schomberg and a body of French volunteers which helped them defend their liberties.[1]

While Louis was feeling his strength he eagerly seized any opportunity for military enterprise which would give a high idea of himself and serve his policy.[b] In spite of his rough treatment of the head of the church in 1662–1664, he displayed zeal for the interests of Christianity against its great enemy the Turks, who continued to press the siege of Crete[2] and extend their conquests in Hungary and to desolate by piracy the entire coast of the Mediterranean. Divers plans were proposed in the king's council for attacking the Ottoman power on the Barbary coasts and repressing the pirates. A squadron commanded by the duke de Beaufort, the former hero of the Fronde, landed 5,000 picked soldiers at Jijelli, a small Algerian port between Bougie and Bona. Jijelli was taken without difficulty (July 22nd, 1664), but discord arose between Beaufort and his officers. They were soon hard pressed by the Turks of Algiers, reinforced by numerous Arab and Kabyle bands, while Beaufort cruised in front of Tunis instead of making a diversion against Algiers, as the king had ordered. The military resources of the Algerians and especially their artillery were greater than the French had imagined; discord broke out, and after having repelled a few attacks the French were compelled to re-embark in such haste that they left their cannon behind.

But the successes of Beaufort's squadron, which the famous Chevalier Paul commanded, soon wiped out the stigma of this reverse; two Algerian flotillas were annihilated during the course of the year 1665.[c]

A touching example of self-sacrifice was an incident of this war. The dey of Algiers had among his captives an officer from St. Malo, named Porcon de la Barbinais; he sent him to offer to the king proposals of peace, making him promise to return in case his mission failed. The lives of 600 Christians were dependent upon his keeping his word. The propositions were not accepted. Porcon knew it. He went to St. Malo, regulated his affairs, then returned to Algiers, certain of the fate which awaited him. The dey had him decapitated. This man was the equal of Regulus, yet he is little known to fame.[d]

[1 These 4,000 veterans under Marshal de Schomberg assisted in 1665, by the battle of Villaviciosa, to settle the house of Braganza on its throne.]

[2 Louis aided the Venetians to defend Crete. Between 1665 and 1669 more than fifty thousand men went there at different times.[d]]

Reasons and pretexts for war with the porte were not long wanting. In 1664 some acts of bad faith on the part of the viziers were taken as an excuse for sending 6,000 men under the orders of Coligny-Saligny into Hungary, which the Turks were invading. This was a means of dissipating the religious clouds which the threats against the pope had raised at Rome and elsewhere. Louis XIV had still another reason. He had undertaken in obtaining a [three years'] prorogation of the league of the Rhine (1663) to furnish a contingent to his imperial allies in case the empire should be threatened. He attached the highest importance to maintaining a league whose principal object would be to close the road to the Netherlands to Austrian troops if ever war should break out between France and Austria, and he believed it all the more easy to play the rôle of protector in Germany since the emperor's power there had sensibly declined since the Treaty of Westphalia.

Coligny-Saligny joined the Austro-German army commanded by Montecuculi; the French took a considerable part in the combat at Körmend, and especially in the battle of St. Gotthard (August 1st, 1664), where they paid dear for the principal honour of the victory. But the emperor and Austria, grateful though they were, could not pardon the French for having claimed to have saved the empire. Leopold hastened to treat with the Turks, and was as eager to deliver himself from his auxiliaries as he was from his enemies.[b]

Indeed the emperor was alarmed, and not without reason, to encounter the hand of Louis everywhere. A defensive alliance was concluded in August, 1663, between France and Denmark, as the result of a commercial treaty, advantageous to the French marine. A secret negotiation of the very highest importance was, about the same time, entered upon with Poland. Since 1661 that republic had taken Louis XIV as arbiter in its quarrels with Moscovy. In 1663, King John Casimir Vasa, discouraged by Poland's constant woes, determined to lay down the crown: his wife, a princess of that branch of the Gonzagas which had long been established in France, entered into communication with Louis XIV to bring about the election of the duke d'Enghien, son of the Great Condé, to the Polish throne. With regret Louis saw Poland plunging to her own ruin, and decided to arrest the disaster by doing again that in which Henry III had so disgracefully failed — infusing French spirit into the land of the Jagellons. Colbert pushed the king to the same policy.[c]

THE WAR OF THE QUEEN'S RIGHTS (1667-1668 A.D.)

Meanwhile Louis XIV had not succeeded in having Maria Theresa's act of renunciation revoked, and he now thought of compelling Madrid to recognise the right of devolution.

Such was the name given in Brabant and some of the other Belgian provinces to the law, by virtue of which, when there were children of two different marriages, those of the first inherited in preference to those of the second. Louis XIV claimed Brabant and its annexes, in the name of Maria Theresa. Philip IV rejected this new claim, which was most contestable, since if the rule of devolution really existed in the above-mentioned provinces, it had to be proven that it applied to the succession of princes as well as to those of private individuals. Moreover all the acts emanating from Spanish sovereigns since Charles V were manifestly contradictory of this. Nevertheless both parties remained on pacific terms until the death of Philip IV and Anne of Austria. The king of Spain expired after a lingering illness

[1665 A.D.]

September 17th, 1665. The queen-mother, his sister, died of a cancer January 20th, 1666, after constant efforts to maintain peace between the two crowns.

Philip IV directed in his will that the 500,000 crowns constituting Maria Theresa's dowry should be paid, but he regulated the succession in such a manner as to confirm the renunciation of that princess and to exclude all pretensions of the house of France to any portion whatsoever of his estates. He left the throne of Spain to a sickly infant scarcely able to walk, and who nobody believed would live. Foreseeing the contingency by which the death of this child, the young Charles II, would extinguish the male line, he stipulated that the throne should pass in that event to his second daughter Margaret and her children. Margaret was then fourteen years of age; she was betrothed to the emperor Leopold, and did in fact marry him the following year.

The reign of an infant under the regency of a foreigner, his mother, Maria Anna of Austria, the exhausted condition of the Spanish realm on account of the Portuguese war, offered a magnificent opportunity for Louis XIV's ambition, but he waited until 1667 before declaring his project. Impatient as he was, a maritime war between England and Holland retarded the execution of his plans.

Under Charles II, as under Cromwell, England had in Holland a rival in commerce and the marine. Charles II, who was desirous of flattering public sentiment and who had the same reason as the Protector to seek in foreign war a diversion to calm restless spirits, entertained, moreover, a profound antipathy for De Witt and other leaders of the republican government at the Hague. He wished to re-establish the stadholdership to the profit of the young William of Orange, his sister's son.[1] In this state of feeling it only required a hostile meeting between some Dutch and English ships off the African coast to precipitate the two navies into a fearful war.

The Dutch convinced themselves that they were the attacked party and demanded assistance of Louis XIV in fulfilment of the guarantee he had given them in 1662. At first Louis refused, alleging that it was not proved that the English were the aggressors, and he offered his mediation. His desire was to act cautiously with regard to England and not drive her to an alliance which Spain was seeking. As to the Dutch, he was beginning to regard them with distrust. The grand pensionary De Witt joined to his fine qualities a shrewdness, a proud reserve, and a talent for making advances without committing himself, which were little to the taste of the French agents. D'Estrades, ambassador to the Hague in 1665, considered an English alliance more desirable for France than one with Holland.

The offer of mediation was declined. Louis XIV tried at least to confine his struggle to a naval war, for he did not wish to see the English on the continent. Meanwhile the states-general were insisting on the complete execution of the guarantee treaty. Louis ended by deciding to declare war on England. He gave out that he wished to convert the world to the religion which kept him to his word. But he informs us himself that there

[1 In 1650 a violent attempt of the young William II of Nassau against the states-general had failed and the stadholder died a few months after, leaving an unborn son who was to become the famous William III. The stadholdership had been abolished and the grand pensionary of the province of Holland became the first personage of the United Provinces, like the president of the states-general. Jan de Witt had been filling these high functions since 1653. Elected at the age of twenty-five, he showed at once the ripeness of a great statesman and the devotion of a great citizen. With a mind at once practical and philosophic, loving letters and the arts as much as affairs, a wise administrator and skilful diplomat, he was not unlike the last great men of Greece; and a contemporary — a very competent judge, the count d'Estrades — has compared his mind to that of Richelieu.e]

were still other reasons; he wished to keep Holland from carrying out her projects against the Netherlands, and prevent a reconciliation with England that might some day be a serious danger to France. He therefore upheld her, but he kept as much as possible to the rôle of a looker-on, and let the English and Dutch fleets almost annihilate each other in the four great combats of two campaigns. The duke de Beaufort and the Brest squadron never left the Channel. The French never fought the English except in the West Indies, where they captured a portion of the island of St. Christopher.

In the beginning of 1667 Louis XIV supported Sweden's offer of mediation, and Breda was chosen as the seat of a congress. Besides the war, England was suffering from another scourge—the plague of 1666. Charles II was satisfied with France's promise of a personal subsidy and with the restitution of St. Christopher without indemnity. The treaty was signed July 31st. Louis XIV did not await this moment to enter Flanders. He based his aggression on the formal refusal of all his demands by the court of Madrid, declaring that, having exhausted all peaceful means of obtaining justice, he was now going to take possession of what belonged to Maria Theresa.[b]



HENRI DE LA TOUR D'AUVERGNE
(1611–1675)

The league of the Rhine assured Louis of at least the neutrality of Germany; the emperor was not prepared for war; Europe, favourable or intimidated, beheld with astonishment King Louis XIV take the field in the month of May, 1667. He had collected an army of fifty thousand men carefully armed and equipped under the direction of Turenne, whom Louvois still obeyed with docility. This fine army was not unequal to the task of vindicating the queen's rights to the duchy of Brabant, the marquisate of Antwerp, Limburg, Hainault, the county of Namur, and other territories. "Heaven not having established a tribunal on earth from which the kings of France may demand justice, the most Christian king can expect it only of his arms," said the manifesto sent to the court of Spain. Louis XIV set out with Turenne. Marshal de Créqui was commissioned to keep a watch on Germany.

The Spaniards were caught unprepared; Armentières, Charleroi, Douai, and Tournay had but inadequate garrisons and succumbed almost without a blow. While the army was occupied with the siege of Courtrai, Louis XIV returned to meet the queen at Compiègne; the whole court followed him to the camp. "I brought the queen to Flanders," said Louis XIV, "to show her to the people of that country, who indeed received her with all the joy imaginable, showing that they were sorry there had not been more time to prepare themselves to receive her more worthily." It was at Courtrai that

[1667–1668 A.D.]

the queen took up her residence. Marshal de Turenne had gone in the direction of Dendermonde, but the Flemings had opened their sluices and the country was inundated; he was obliged to fall back on Oudenarde; the town was taken in two days. The king, still followed by the court, laid siege to Lille. Vauban, already celebrated as an engineer, formed his lines of circumvallation. Créqui's army rejoined that of Turenne; an effort on the part of the governor of the Netherlands to relieve the town was anticipated; the Spanish troops sent for that purpose arrived too late and were defeated as they retired; the citizens of Lille had forced the garrison to capitulate; Louis XIV entered the place on the 27th of August, ten days after the trenches were opened. On the 2nd of September the king set out on the way back to St. Germain; Turenne also took the town of Alost before going into winter quarters.

THE TRIPLE ALLIANCE

The first campaign of Louis XIV had been merely a warlike game almost without danger or bloodshed; it had nevertheless sufficed to alarm Europe. Scarcely had peace been concluded at Breda before another negotiation was secretly entered into between England, Holland, and Sweden. It was in vain that King Charles II was personally inclined to an alliance with France; his people had their eyes open to the dangers which Europe incurred from the arms of Louis XIV. On the 23rd of January, 1668, the celebrated Treaty of the Triple Alliance was signed at the Hague. The three powers requested the king of France to grant the Netherlands a truce till the month of May, in order to give time to treat with Spain and obtain from her, as France demanded, the final cession of the places conquered or of Franche-Comté in exchange. In reality the triple alliance was resolved to protect helpless Spain against France; a secret article pledged the three allies to take arms to restrain Louis XIV and if possible to bring him back to the position fixed by the Treaty of the Pyrenees. At the same moment Portugal made peace with Spain, which recognised her independence.

The king refused to concede the prolonged armistice which had been demanded of him: "I grant it till the 31st of March," he had said, "as I do not wish to miss the season for taking the field." The marquis of Castel Rodrigo laughed at this: "I am content," he said, "with the suspension of arms which winter imposes on the king of France." The governor of the Netherlands was mistaken; Louis XIV was about to prove that his soldiers, like those of Gustavus Adolphus, did not know what winter was. He had confided the command of his new army to the prince of Condé, who had been amnestied nine years before but had hitherto been a stranger to the royal favours.[g]

Under pretext of being in Burgundy for the estates, Monsieur le Prince had made careful note that Franche-Comté was without troops and unsuspecting, because the inhabitants did not doubt that the king would grant them neutrality as in the last war, since they had sent to him to demand it. He kept up the delusion.[e]

The gaieties of St. Germain were at their height, when in the depth of winter in the month of January, 1668, all were astonished to see troops marching in all directions, coming and going on the roads of Champagne and in the Three Bishoprics — trains of artillery, wagons of munitions stopping under various pretexts in the roads which lead from Champagne to Burgundy. That part of France was filled with movement of which the cause was unknown. The uninitiated out of interest, and the courtiers out of

curiosity, exhausted themselves in conjectures; Germany was alarmed; the object of these preparations and peculiar actions was a mystery to everybody. The secrets of conspiracies were never more closely guarded than in this enterprise of Louis XIV.

Finally, on February 2nd, the king left St. Germain with the young duke d'Enghien, son of the Great Condé, and several courtiers; the other officers being at the rendezvous with their troops. He travelled on horseback by long stages and arrived at Dijon. Twenty thousand men, assembled by twenty different routes, found themselves on the same day in Franche-Comté, several leagues from Besançon, the Great Condé at their head.*f* Besançon and Salins surrendered at sight of the troops. When the king arrived he went to Dôle and caused counterscarps and demilunes to be set up. Four or five hundred men were killed here. The amazed inhabitants, seeing themselves surrounded by troops and without hope of succour, surrendered on Shrove Tuesday, February 14th. The king at the same time marched to Gray. The governor made as though he would defend himself, but the marquis d'Yenne, governor-general under Castel Rodrigo, who was of the country and had all his property there, came to surrender to the king and, going to Gray, persuaded the governor to surrender. The king entered Gray on Sunday, the 19th of February, and there caused a *Te Deum* to be sung, having the governor-general at his right hand and the governor of the town itself on his left; and the same day he set out to return. Thus in twenty-two days of the month of February he had started from St. Germain, had been to Franche-Comté, taken complete possession of it, and returned to St. Germain.*e* The king was back at St. Germain preparing enormous armaments for the month of April; he had given the prince of Condé the government of Franche-Comté.

Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1668 A.D.)

War seemed imminent. The last days of the armistice were at hand. "The opinion of peace which prevails in France is a malady which is becoming widespread," Louvois wrote in the middle of March; "but we shall soon be cured, since the time to take the field is drawing near. You must give out everywhere that the Spaniards will not have peace." Louvois was uttering a shameless falsehood; the Spaniards were without resources, but they had still less courage than resources; and consented to the abandonment of all the places in the Netherlands conquered in 1667.

A congress was opened at Aix-la-Chapelle and was presided over by the nuncio of the new pope Clement IX, who was as favourable to France as his predecessor Innocent X had been to Spain — "a phantom arbitrator between phantom plenipotentiaries," says Voltaire. The real negotiations took place at St. Germain. "I did not only take care," writes Louis XIV, "to profit by the present conjuncture, but also to put myself in a position to turn to good account those which seemed likely to ensue. Amid the great augmentations which my fortune might receive, nothing seemed to me more necessary than to acquire for myself, among my smaller neighbours, a reputation for moderation and probity which might quiet in them those emotions of terror which all naturally feel at the aspect of too great power. I must not lack the means of breaking with Spain when I wish to do so; Franche-Comté which I surrendered might be reduced to such a condition that I could be master of it at any time, and my new conquests, well secured, would open me a surer entry to the Netherlands." Determined by these wise motives,

[1668–1671 A.D.]

the king gave the order to sign; and the 2nd of May, 1668, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle was concluded. Before surrendering Franche-Comté the king gave orders to demolish the fortifications of Dôle and Gray; at the same time he commissioned Vauban to fortify Ath, Lille, and Tournay. The triple alliance was triumphant, the Dutch especially.*g*

PROJECTS AGAINST HOLLAND (1668–1672 A.D.)

The first period of the diplomatic and military history of Louis XIV closes with the treaty that ended the War of the Queen's Rights. A new era is about to open in which Louis will cast aside the compass that was so safely directing the ship of France to follow no other guides than his passion and his fortune.

Recent events had succeeded in crushing the old French sympathies for Holland, much weakened since the Dutch defection of 1648. Resentment against the unfaithful ally, very keen in the active and military element of the nation, had reached a point of exasperation with the king, who was not unaware of the secret clauses of the Treaty of the Hague.[1] Louis, who had laid down his arms much less for the confederates of the Hague than for the sake of the future Spanish succession, bore a grudge against Holland, not so much for having really arrested his progress [by having formed the triple alliance] as for having boasted of doing so. Pride had turned the head of the little republic, which plumed itself on having laid colossal Spain low, saved Denmark from the blows of Sweden, beaten, or at least quit even with England, set a limit on French conquests, and drawn into its hands three-quarters of European commerce and sea trade.

But wounded pride was far from being the only motive that turned Louis XIV against Holland. He was convinced that he must crush her in order to get Belgium, and consequently he must appear, momentarily, to forget the end in order to remove the obstacle. He might then, strictly speaking, imagine to himself that he was still pursuing his old plans, and was only changing the means of French policy; but passion might easily make him take the means for the end. This passion, generated by diplomatic disappointments, was nourished and envenomed by the dissimilarity between the institutions, principles, and beliefs of the French and Dutch governments. Holland was not only an unfaithful ally — she was a republican and Protestant nation, the home of religious and political liberty, which Louis hated with a growing hatred as his monarchy became more clearly outlined in his head.

After the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, the ruin of Holland became the king's fixed idea. It was no longer a question of the commercial war so ably conducted by Colbert with his tariffs and his differential rights — it was a war of invasion and conquest that Louis was planning.*c*

The resolution taken, he adjourned its execution until such time as he had completed the organisation of his sea forces, which were not then on a level with those of the land, and until he could assure himself that Europe would not interfere with his plan. The able and indefatigable Lionne consecrated the last three years of his life (he died in 1671) to performing diplomatic wonders to acquire this certitude.

While he was waiting, Louis XIV neglected no opportunities that pre-

[1] By these secret articles England and Holland agreed to make war on Louis XIV if he went back on his word, and they proposed to compel him to make peace without including Portugal, if Spain was determined on this point.]

sented themselves to feed warlike passions and provide employment for his unengaged officers and troops. In 1669 he sent a volunteer corps to Crete to assist the Venetians, threatened in the capital of that island. Beaufort disappeared in a combat, and Vivonne ineffectually bombarded the grand vizier's camp. But this was only a diversion from more important projects. Louis XIV wished to isolate Holland, and for that reason to break the triple alliance. He began by trying to detach England from it.

The English were not less jealous than the Dutch of France's maritime progress; they were not less frightened at Louis' ambitions. But Charles II did not share these feelings. Although he had experienced all the hazards of fortune, the vicissitudes of his life had in nowise elevated his character. After the Treaty of Breda, he signed that of the Triple Alliance and united with the Dutch, as a concession to national sentiment. But he did not like parliament, and felt an especial aversion for the Presbyterian spirit, and the religious passions which had brought about the English Revolution. Finally, about 1670, he resolved to become a Catholic, perhaps through real conviction, perhaps through the influence of his brother, the duke of York, a secret convert to the church of Rome, who was animated by the true ardour of a neophyte; perhaps because he hoped to find in Catholicism a more solid support for his throne and his royal prerogative than in Anglicanism.

To realise his object a French alliance was indispensable. France alone could provide him with the money he needed; his court was wasteful and in debt, and parliament measured out subsidies with jealous parsimony. If France demanded the sacrifice of Holland, he was ready to make it.

Under these conditions he readily lent ear to the overtures of the French ambassadors, Ruvigny and Colbert de Croissy, the minister's brother. He did not delay to let Louis XIV into the secret of his plans. Louis asked nothing better than to grant much on condition that England would join him in war on Holland. Nevertheless the negotiations dragged on account of the precautions necessary to secrecy, and it took more than a year to arrive finally at an understanding. When all was arranged Charles II demanded that his sister, the duchess of Orleans, should come to England and sign the treaty.[b]

The Treaty of Dover: Death of Madame (1670 A.D.)

On the 24th of May Madame Henrietta suddenly left the court which was at Lille and embarked at Dunkirk for Dover where Charles II was awaiting her. She persuaded Charles to sign the treaty without delay (June 1st). The English monarch led his sister to hope that he would consent that the attack on Holland should precede his declaration of Catholicism. This is what Louis XIV most wished for. The treaty, however, far from committing Charles to this course, stipulated that after Charles should have made "the said declaration," Louis might choose the moment of attack on Holland.[1] Louis was to give Charles two millions, payable two and three months after the exchange of ratification and was to assist him with six thousand foot soldiers, if the return to Catholicism should excite trouble. Charles was to furnish Louis at least four thousand foot soldiers against Holland, Louis to reinforce the English fleet by thirty vessels, of at least forty guns, and to pay Charles an annual subsidy of three millions during the

[1] It was afterwards decided to defer the execution of the attack on Holland until 1672. A new treaty was signed at Dover, December 31st, 1670, modifying the first in several points.

[1670–1672 A.D.]

continuation of the war. The island of Walcheren (with Sluys and Causand at the mouth of the Schelde) were to go to England.

An unforeseen catastrophe fell now like a thunder-clap upon the two royal families which had just sealed the pact of Dover. The household of Louis XIV's brother had long been disturbed by domestic tempests. The amiable and brilliant Henrietta, adored by the court, esteemed by the king, who confided to her the most secret springs of his policy, inspired nothing but antipathy in her husband, an effeminate prince, as mediocre in mind as in heart, whose childish and strange habits have given rise to suspicion of shameful practices. The king had recently intervened in the family quarrels by imprisoning and afterwards exiling the chevalier de Lorraine, Monsieur's favourite. After this the king had had great difficulty in compelling his brother to allow Madame Henrietta to go to Dover.

She returned in triumph; leaving Dover on the 12th of June, she appeared for a moment at St. Germain where the court was established; the 24th of June her husband took her to St. Cloud, where she had scarcely arrived when she complained of pains in her stomach and side. For several days she lingered, and on the 29th, after having drunk a glass of chicory-water, she was seized with a violent pain in the side; the next day before daybreak she was dead. In her last agony she repeated several times that she was dying of poison.

An outbreak of terrible suspicion against her husband and his people occurred at once. The king had an autopsy performed by the most celebrated physicians and surgeons of Paris, who agreed that death was due to natural causes, and that it was a wonder the princess had lived so long with her lungs and liver so gravely affected. The question, however, has remained a question of controversy among historians to this day.[1] The news of this tragic event made a great stir in England; but the real sorrow expressed by Louis XIV and the report of the physicians calmed Charles II and his court.[c]

Treaties with Other Powers (1670–1672 A.D.)

Already, as early as 1667, Louis XIV had privately provided for the neutrality of the empire by a secret treaty regulating the eventual partition of the Spanish monarchy. In case the little king of Spain should die without children, France was to receive the Netherlands, Franche-Comté, Navarre, Naples, and Sicily; Austria would keep Spain and the Milanese. Accordingly the emperor Leopold turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of the Dutch, who would have persuaded him to join the triple alliance; and a new agreement between France and the empire, signed secretly November 1st, 1670, reciprocally bound the two princes not to give help to their enemies. The German princes were more difficult to win over; they were beginning to be alarmed at the pretensions of France. The electors of Treves and Mainz had already assembled troops on the Rhine; and the duke of Lorraine seemed disposed to give them assistance. Louis XIV took as a pretext the erection of some fortifications contrary to the Treaty of Marsal; on the 23rd of August, 1670, he sent Marshal de Créqui into Lorraine; in the beginning of

[1 The chevalier de Lorraine and a maître d'hôtel of Monsieur, Morel by name, were among those suspected of poison. We have seen in the preceding chapter how epidemic that crime became about that time. However, the theory of natural death, the result of an abscess of the liver, hastened by domestic troubles, is now generally accepted as the cause of Madame's death. Dareste *b* says it was due to cholera morbus. Madame was only twenty-six years old.]

September the duchy was entirely subdued and the duke a refugee. To the emperor's protest, the king responded that he did not want Lorraine for himself, but that he would never surrender it to anyone's petitions. Brandenburg and Saxony alone refused neutrality point-blank; France had renounced the Protestant alliances in Germany, and the Protestant electors recognised the danger which threatened them.

Sweden also recognised it, but Gustavus Adolphus and Oxenstierna were no longer there; the memory of former alliances with France alone remained; the Swedish senators, one after another, allowed themselves to be bought. The treaty was signed the 14th of April, 1672; for an annual subsidy of 600,000 livres Sweden pledged herself to offer armed opposition to the princes of the empire who should attempt to succour the United Provinces; a space was being cleared round Holland.[1]

In spite of the secrecy which surrounded the negotiations of Louis XIV, De Witt was filled with anxiety; always favourable to the French alliance, he had sought to calm the irritation of France which imputed the triple alliance to the Dutch. Jan de Witt negotiated everywhere; Charles' treaty with France had remained a profound secret, and the Dutch thought they could count on the good will of the English nation. They effaced the arms of England on the *Royal Charles*, a vessel taken by Tromp in 1667, and hid from sight a picture in the town hall of Dordrecht which represented the victory of Chatham with the *ruart*[2] Cornelis de Witt leaning against a cannon. These concessions to the pride of England were not made without a contest.

THE WAR WITH HOLLAND BEGINS (1672 A.D.)

The apprehensions of the grand pensionary were not without foundation; in the spring of 1672 all the negotiations of Louis XIV had been successful; his armaments were complete; he was at last about to crush the little power which had so long presented an obstacle to his designs. The king wrote in an unpublished memoir: "Amidst all my prosperity in my campaign of 1667, neither England nor the empire, both convinced of the justice of my cause, opposed themselves to the rapidity of my conquests, whatever interest they may have had to stop them. I found in my path only my good, faithful, and old-time friends, the Dutch, who instead of identifying themselves with my fortune as with the foundation of their state, sought to dictate to me and to compel me to peace, and even dared to threaten violence in case I refused to accept their interference. I confess that their insolence stung me keenly and that I was ready, at the risk of what might happen to my conquests in the Spanish Netherlands, to turn all my forces against this haughty and ungrateful nation; but having summoned prudence to my aid and considering that I had neither the number of troops nor the allies requisite for such an enterprise, I dissimulated and concluded peace on honourable conditions, resolved to postpone the punishment of this perfidy to another time." The time had come; to the last effort at conciliation attempted in the name of the states-general, by De Groot, son of the celebrated Grotius, the king answered with a haughty threat: "When I heard that the United Provinces were endeavouring to corrupt my allies, and were urging kings, my relatives, to enter into offensive leagues against me, I sought to put myself in a position to defend myself, and I raised some

[1 This was an important departure from the old policy of Francis I and of Richelieu, who, for political reasons, made Protestant alliances abroad, though upholding Catholicism at home.]

[2 Ruart means inspector of the dykes.]

[1672 A.D.]

troops; but I intend to have still more towards the spring, and I will then use them in the manner which I may judge the best adapted for the welfare of my states and for my glory." *g*

A public treaty had just been signed between France and England (February 12th), and the English, according to their custom, attacked without declaration of war. On March 23rd an English squadron assailed a Dutch merchant fleet returning from Smyrna off the isle of Wight. The Dutch defended themselves so well that the aggressors after two days of fighting were only able to capture two or three merchant ships and one man-of-war. Charles II's declaration of war was published March 29th, six days after this fight. That of Louis XIV was launched on the 6th of April.[c]



Louis II de Bourbon, Prince de Condé (1621–1686)

"The king sets out to-morrow, my daughter," writes Madame de Sévigné *i* to Madame de Grignan on the 27th of April; "there will be 100,000 men outside Paris, the two armies will join hands; the king will give orders to Monsieur, Monsieur to Monsieur le Prince, Monsieur le Prince to M. de Turenne, and M. de Turenne to the two marshals, and even to the army of Marshal de Créqui." *g*

Ninety thousand men were gathered from Sedan to Charleroi; the bishop of Münster, the bishop of Cologne, and other German princes furnished about 20,000 more. The king led this magnificent army in person; Condé, Turenne, Luxemburg, Chamilly, were in command under him. Vauban was to take the towns, Pellisson to record the victories. What had Holland to bring in opposition to such an enemy? She had a formidable navy; two admirals, regarded to this day as the greatest of their century, Tromp and De Ruyter; rich colonies, and an immense commerce; but she had neglected her land-forces, so often dangerous in a republic; she could hardly count upon 25,000 militia, badly equipped and wholly without discipline, and 20,000 men promised by the elector of Brandenburg were at the same time very insufficient and very far away. The intestine struggles also enfeebled her; there were two parties, the one led by Jan de Witt, and entirely devoted to the cause of ancient liberty. The other aimed at the restoration of the young prince of Orange to the heritage of his ancestors, and profiting by the present danger nominated him captain-general at the age of twenty-two.

The Passage of the Rhine (June, 1672 A.D.)

Meanwhile Louis XIV advanced along the Maas, upon the lands of the bishop of Liège, his ally, in order not to invade Spanish territory, thence along the right bank of the Rhine from Wesel to Toll-Huys. There the

inhabitants informed the prince of Condé that the dryness of the season had made the river fordable. Crossing was easy. On the other shore only 400 to 500 cavalry were to be seen and two feeble regiments of infantry without cannon. The artillery mowed down their flank. While the king's household and the crack regiments of cavalry, in number about 15,000 men, were crossing in safety, the prince of Condé went beside them in a copper-bottomed boat. A small number of the Dutch cavalry rode into the river to give at least a semblance of resistance, but took flight immediately before the approaching multitude. Their infantry laid down their arms and begged for their lives. The French lost in that passage only the count de Nogent, and several cavalrymen who strayed from the ford and were drowned. No one would have been killed on that day had it not been for the imprudence of the young duke de Longueville. It was said that, being intoxicated, he fired his pistol at the enemy, who were begging on their knees for their lives, crying, "No quarter for that rabble!" One of their officers was killed by his shot. The Dutch infantry despairingly resumed their weapons for a moment and fired a charge which killed the duke de Longueville. A captain of cavalry, who had not taken flight with the others, ran to the prince of Condé who was mounting his horse, and pressed his pistol against the prince's head, who by a movement turned aside and had his wrist shattered by the bullet. This was the only wound Condé ever received. The French, exasperated, charged upon that infantry, which took flight in all directions. Louis XIV crossed on a pontoon bridge with his infantry (June 12th, 1672).[d]

Such was the passage of the Rhine, celebrated ever after as one of the great events which should occupy the memories of men. That air of greatness with which the king surrounded all his actions, the fortunate rapidity of his conquests, the splendour of his reign, the idolatry of his courtiers, finally the tendency the French, above all the Parisians, have towards exaggeration joined to their ignorance concerning war which ruled in the idle life of the large cities — all this caused the passage of the Rhine to be regarded as a prodigious achievement whose fame continued to be exaggerated. The common belief was that the whole army had crossed the river swimming, in the face of a thoroughly entrenched army, and in spite of the artillery of an impregnable fortress called Tholus (Toll-Huys). It was very true that nothing could have been a more imposing sight to the foe than this passage, and if there had been a corps of serviceable troops on the other side the enterprise would have been very perilous.[f]

Fifteen years later Bossuet said in his funeral oration of the prince of Condé, "Let us leave the passage of the Rhine the prodigy of our century and of the life of Louis the Great." But Bossuet was not writing history in his funeral orations. Neither does Napoleon in his *Mémoires* share the enthusiasm of the sacred orator: "The passage of the Rhine is a military operation of the fourth order, since in that place the river is fordable, impoverished by the Waal, and moreover was defended by only a handful of men." "I have seen a woman," says Voltaire, "who crossed the Rhine twenty times at that place to defraud the customs." The Toll-Huys was exactly what its name indicates.

THE FRENCH IN HOLLAND AND GERMANY (1672–1673 A.D.)

With the Rhine crossed, Holland was open to invasion. The provinces of Overyssel, of Gelderland, and Utrecht submitted without trying to defend themselves; there were very few hours during the day in which the king did

not receive news of some victory. An officer wrote to Turenne: "If you will send me fifty cavalrymen I will take two or three fortresses with them."

Four soldiers became in a few moments masters of Muiden, the key to Amsterdam, because the sluices by which the country surrounding the capital could be flooded were in this village. The generals called to council were anxious to march at once upon Amsterdam, Louvois thought it better to garrison the forts; the army was in this manner enfeebled and its operations retarded. Upon this the Dutch took courage once more, and concentrating the state forces into the hands of one man, raised William of Orange to the stadholdership (July 6th, 1672). This prince was to save the independence of his country.[d] Soon afterward an infuriated populace slaughtered the illustrious chiefs of the republican party, Jan and Cornelis de Witt. French historians charge William with complicity in these murders. Burnett, however, says that William "always spoke of it to me with the greatest horror possible," and there seems no good ground to doubt that this sentiment was genuine. To suppose otherwise would seem to belie the character of this far seeing, cautious, unconquerable man.[a]

The military dictatorship confided to the prince of Orange gave a new aspect to the situation; he had the dykes cut, flooding all the country surrounding Amsterdam, and forced the French to retreat before the inundation.[d]

The French king, in the meantime, in answer to the Dutch deputies who sought for peace (De Groot was of the number), demanded for himself the limit of the Rhine, and the re-establishment of the Catholic religion in Holland, besides satisfaction to the demands of the English. The Dutch magnanimously refused such terms. The capital was for this year secure behind its waters; the French army being weakened by garrisoning so many towns. Condé pressed the monarch to dismantle these towns, and unite the army to reduce Amsterdam; but Louvois, minister-at-war, biased by his peculiar pursuits, would not consent to the demolition of a single bulwark. The consequence was that nothing more could be effected, and Louis returned, to enjoy the congratulations of his capital and the flatteries of his court.[j]

THE NEW COALITION AGAINST FRANCE (1673 A.D.)

This is an epoch of great importance. The state system of the treaty of Westphalia was really upset by Louis' aggressions, *e.g.* the German states making common cause with Emperor; and the fear of French predominance acted from now on through the Dutch war and the War of the Spanish Succession as a new and dominant force in European politics, much as the preeminence of the Hapsburgs had acted before Westphalia. From now to the treaty of Utrecht, European history is on another track, and the treaty of Utrecht, which closes the foreign policy of Louis XIV, is the real end of the chapter of history we are now beginning.[a]

Neither Spain nor Germany could remain indifferent spectators of Louis XIV's progress and Holland's peril. Although Spain had not pronounced herself, Monterey, the governor of Brussels, had furnished the prince of Orange some auxiliary troops. The elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William — "the Great Elector" — promised his assistance to the states-general by a secret treaty. He also agitated the north German courts and that of Vienna, representing to them the necessity of a coalition. Austria, more reserved, was none the less exasperated in spite of the arrangement to which she had consented, and concluded a ten years' defensive alliance with the great

elector. The emperor likewise concluded another treaty with the states-general, promising auxiliary troops for a subsidy.

Louis XIV, warned by these events, gave these princes the most solemn assurances of his intention to respect the Treaty of Westphalia as well as the imperial territory. But as these assurances had no effect, he finally declared that the continuation of their armed condition would be regarded as an act of hostility against his allies of Cologne and Münster, and he declined the responsibility of any war that might ensue.

Montecuculi [the imperial general] and the great elector united their forces, which with the German contingents amounted to 40,000 men. Louis XIV gave orders to Turenne to leave to Luxemburg the protection of the conquered towns in Holland, and to betake himself with 16,000 men to the lower Rhine, keeping the Germans from crossing, and to protect the territories of Cologne and Münster. Condé was charged with covering the upper Rhine and Alsace with an equal number of troops. The Germans' plan was to march upon the Maas, to establish themselves there, and then to bring thither the prince of Orange and cut off in this manner communication between France and the French garrisons in Holland. But Turenne, stationed at Andernach, kept them a long time on the banks of the Rhine. They tried to cross higher up; Condé had destroyed the bridge at Strasburg, but after several weeks they succeeded (on November 23rd) in building a bridge of boats near Mainz. Turenne doubled on his track to cover the Maas. The Germans spread themselves over the electorate of Treves and the Palatinate; but this country being already ruined they could find no sustenance, and they recrossed the Rhine to live on the lands of Cologne and Münster. Turenne followed them.



Soldier, Time of Louis XIV

Meanwhile Orange rallied a Spanish corps commanded by Marchin; he drove off Duras who was guarding the Maas with several French regiments, and conceived the bold idea of occupying Charleroi. He undertook the siege on the 15th of December, but he did not have sufficient material and had to retire before the arrival of Condé's troops and the Flemish garrisons which Louis XIV ordered to Charleroi. [Notwithstanding the lack of troops, withheld through the jealousy of Luvois, these are said to have been Turenne's most brilliant campaigns.]

By March, 1673, Turenne had driven the Germans across the Weser, and Frederick William, convinced of his powerlessness, and discontented with his allies, asked for peace. Louis XIV was eager to grant it, for he was in a hurry to dissolve the coalition, and simply imposed conditions that the elector should not assist Holland, or maintain troops beyond the Weser. Louis consented to withdraw his own troops from Frederick's territory

except from the towns in the duchy of Cleves, which he intended to hold until peace should be declared. This treaty was made definite the 6th of June, 1673, at Vossem, and Louis XIV almost at the same time signed two others with the duke of Hanover and the elector of Cologne, assuring defensive and offensive alliances on the part of France. Henceforth he regarded himself as delivered from all fear on the side of northern Germany.

Louis was not willing to submit to a mediation purposed by the emperor with arms in his hand. In the month of December, 1672, he accepted that which the Swedes offered. The mediation of Sweden was accepted by the other belligerents; it was agreed that a congress should be held at Cologne, but various delays postponed the first *pourparlers* until June, 1673.

Louis XIV in agreeing to this congress had attached little importance to it and counted in reality upon war alone. For the campaign of 1673 he disposed of 800,000 men without counting the garrisons of Roussillon, Pinerolo, and Lorraine. In the month of June he sent Turenne into Hesse to watch the imperials who were reorganising their army. He gave Condé the command of the Dutch garrisons and placed Luxemburg under him. He himself went to besiege Maestricht with 45,000 of his best troops. He had no desire to declare war upon the Spaniards although Monterey had upheld the Dutch; nevertheless he traversed their territory and made a false demonstration upon Brussels in order to deceive them.

The 10th of June he arrived before Maestricht. He had reserved for himself the chief command, which he wished to share with no one. But Vauban was with him and alone conducted and directed the work of approach. This was begun on the 17th and on the 29th the miner was under the town. The next day the garrison, although strong and well commanded, was obliged to capitulate.

If the taking of Maestricht was a brilliant success, the king really sacrificed to it the campaign in the Netherlands, which had an unfortunate ending. The Anglo-French fleet had, on its side, appeared in the arena. It numbered 90 ships of the line of which 30 were French. Parliament had voted a subsidy, but as it suspected King Charles' project of becoming a Catholic, it had made a condition that a declaration of conformity to the Anglican church should be imposed upon all officers of the crown. The duke of York was unwilling to submit to the obligation of the "test" and had been dismissed from the admiralty. De Ruyter took command of the Dutch fleet with Tromp second in command, and advanced against the enemy, giving two battles on the 7th and 14th of June which remained undecided. The Anglo-French fleet having put back into the Thames for repairs embarked the troops under Schomberg's command and set sail for the shores of the Netherlands. De Ruyter on the 21st of August gave a more decisive battle, in that it prevented the landing of the forces, and compelled the fleet to retire.

The Dutch, emboldened by this success, raised little by little their tone and their claims at the congress of Cologne. They cut down greatly the concessions they were offering France and reduced to almost nothing those they consented to grant the king of England, the elector of Cologne, and the bishop of Münster. They intended to make no sacrifice essential to keeping their rank as a great power. Louis XIV held out for a long time and obtained nothing; finally, on the 30th of September, he reduced his claims to Aire, St. Omer, Cambray, Ypres, and their dependencies and the two castellanies of Bailleul and Cassel. As these places belonged to Spain, he demanded that Spain should be indemnified by the United Provinces,

which would have recovered all that they had lost. This proposition was rejected like the others.

Holland was now counting on more important alliances than those of 1672. She no longer feared England, where the reawakening of the Protestant spirit would reduce Charles II to powerlessness. She had signed on the 30th of August three treaties, with Spain, with Austria, and with the duke of Lorraine. Spain had not declared war on Louis XIV, as she did not wish to enter the arena except with a European coalition; but now, having procured resources by extraordinary taxation and having succeeded in overcoming the irresolution of the court of Vienna, she made a twenty-five-years' treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with the republic, promising to furnish 8,000 men.

Austria, assured of Spain and the military co-operation of several German states, among others Saxony, resolved to recommence her preceding campaign. She made a point of war of Turenne's presence on the right bank of the Rhine and demanded the restitution of the places of the empire, that of Lorraine for Duke Charles IV, and the abandonment of France's claims to the fiefs of Alsace and the Three Bishoprics. On Louis XIV's refusal, Leopold addressed a declaration to the diet of Ratisbon, making known his intentions, and signed with Holland a ten-years' treaty of offensive and defensive alliance, enjoining himself for a subsidy to furnish 30,000 men. As for the duke of Lorraine, he put, on consideration of a subsidy, his sword and his troops at the service of the Dutch. Thus the latter were paying for the war, and the war under these conditions was changing its character, becoming European, and little by little withdrawing from their territory.

Louis XIV recalled Condé to Flanders, where he left him with but few troops. He gave Luxemburg the supreme command of the Dutch garrisons, and he planned himself to lead the army which had taken Maestricht to the Rhine, to occupy the bridges, and to support Turenne. Up to the last minute he refused to believe in the coalition, but when he saw it an accomplished fact he resolved to face it. Treves was occupied August 26th; Louis XIV then visited Alsace and Lorraine, strengthening fortifications without taking into consideration the privileges the towns enjoyed from the Treaty of Münster. Montecuculi, at the head of the imperials, left Bohemia in September and marched towards the Rhine. Turenne tried without success to stop him at the Tauber and at the crossing of the Main. He turned north, crossed the Rhine on a bridge of boats near Mainz, and finally marched upon Bonn, before which he joined the 25,000 Spanish and Dutch troops led by the prince of Orange, at the end of October.

Orange had taken the offensive, and captured Naerden in six days (September), crossed the Spanish Netherlands, where Condé had not sufficient force to stop him, and gained the electorate of Cologne, to join hands with the imperials. [This juncture of imperial and Dutch troops constituted an important success for the coalition.] United they attacked Bonn and took it on November 12th.

The taking of Bonn detached Germany from Louis XIV. Louvois had already a few days before given Luxemburg orders to evacuate Utrecht and the more distant places, keeping only those on the Maas, Waal, and Rhine, to destroy as far as possible abandoned fortifications, to reduce garrisons to 20,000, and to send home 30,000; but these orders took time to execute, and their execution, being compulsory, was a fresh subject of triumph for Holland and Europe.

1674 A.D.]

The winter stopped hostilities, without ending the reverses ; for Louis XIV now saw himself abandoned by England and the whole empire aroused against him.[b]

Defection of England and the Imperial Allies (1674 A.D.)

The Protestant inquietude of the English parliament had not yielded to the influence of the marquis de Ruvigny, French ambassador to London, and the nation wanted peace with the Dutch. Charles II yielded in appearance at least to the wishes of his people. On February 21st, 1674, he went to parliament to announce to the two houses that he had concluded with the United Provinces a prompt, honourable, and, he hoped, durable peace, as they had asked for. At the same time he wrote to Louis XIV asking him to pity rather than accuse him of a consent that had been dragged from him. The English and Irish regiments remained, without remark, in the service of France, and the king did not withdraw his subsidy from his royal pensioner.

Thus, link by link, the chain of alliance which Louis XIV had cast around Holland was coming apart. In her turn France was finding herself alone. The congress of Cologne had dissolved. None of the belligerents was looking for peace.[g]

The bishop of Münster, who could no longer count on the help of the French, had already secretly approached the emperor, and in April, 1674, agreed to defend by arms the decisions of the diet of Ratisbon, and restore all that he had taken from the Dutch. The electors of Treves and Mainz concluded an offensive pact with the emperor. So did the elector palatine, that eternal enemy of Austria. As early as January, Denmark, seeing Sweden inclined towards France, had thrown herself on the side of the emperor. The dukes of Brunswick and Lüneburg promised auxiliaries to Leopold for a subsidy. In May the elector of Cologne treated with the United Provinces, and then gave them back the places he had taken. Like the king of England, in abandoning France he at least left the soldiers he had furnished. On the 28th of May the Germanic diet finally pronounced against France and declared that the emperor's war was a war of the empire. The great work of French politics was destroyed ; Austria had regained, thanks to Louis XIV's excesses, the supremacy and the direction of Germany against France.[c]

OPERATIONS IN FRANCHE-COMTÉ ; TURENNE IN ALSACE (1674-1675 A.D.)

With the war thus become European, Louis XIV changed its object with a decision that did him honour. He abandoned Holland, which he was not strong enough to retain, and turned all his forces against Spain, the weakest of the states of the league. With 20,000 men and Vauban, he took the direction of Franche-Comté. The second conquest was almost as rapid as the first ; Besançon was taken in nine days, and the entire province in six weeks (May, 1674).

The allies had planned for this year a double and formidable invasion of France by way of Lorraine and through the Netherlands. Turenne was to stop the one, Condé the other. But the enemy was so slow in beginning operations that the conquest of Franche-Comté was finished before they had decided on their movements. Turenne was thus enabled to take the offensive : he crossed the Rhine at Philippsburg with 20,000 men, destroyed with fire the whole Palatinate in order to prevent the enemy from subsisting

there, and fought a number of unimportant engagements at Sinsheim and at Ladenburg in July, 1674, where he showed resources of tactics unheard of until then.[d] To this day numberless ruins of castles along the Rhine bear witness to the savage work of Turenne.[a]

The imperials numbered 40,000 men. Moreover it was known that the elector of Brandenburg, Frederick William, was coming with all haste at the head of 20,000 men to assist Bournonville [who replaced Montecuculi, who was ill, in the command of the imperial troops], and to crush the French by superiority of numbers. This juncture once effected, the French would be done for. Already in Germany they spoke of nothing less than marching on Paris itself. Many princesses accompanied the elector, saying they would "make the acquaintance of the French ladies, to learn manners from this polite nation."



A Captain, Time of Louis XIV

Fortunately Turenne was on the watch. To prevent the two armies joining, he began by attacking that which was nearer. He approached Bournonville by a forced march of forty hours, and, without even giving his soldiers time to rest, fell on the surprised imperialists at Enzheim and forced them to retire under the walls of Strasburg in the greatest disorder (October 4th, 1674). It was a great victory, but the numerical inferiority of his troops hindered his reaping its full fruits. Ten days after this victory the elector of Brandenburg in his turn passed the Kehl bridge and joined his 20,000 men to Bournonville's army. Turenne received scarcely sufficient reinforcements to repair his losses at Enzheim. The situation became more and more serious. How could it be thought that the genius of a single man could compensate for such an overwhelming disparity of forces — how believe that 20,000 Frenchmen could hold their own against 60,000 Germans? No one doubted that the nation would soon be swallowed up in defeat. Fear gained ground in the northeast provinces; peasants abandoned their fields and flocked into the towns to seek shelter from the enemy. Even at Paris great anxiety prevailed. It seemed as if the capital of France would soon be at the mercy of the German army.

Alsace comprises the country between the Rhine and the Vosges, forming, from Hüningen or Belfort at the south, to Weissenburg on the Lauter at the north, a long band of territory of almost constant breadth. The river and mountain which serve for limits for this province in the east and west run nearly parallel one with the other. The Vosges separate Alsace from Lorraine. After the juncture of the two armies near Strasburg on the 14th of October, Turenne retired slowly in good order in the direction of the defiles which assured communication between Alsace and Lorraine. The Germans followed the same route in this retrograde march. By this time November

had arrived with its cold and snow. The German generals, reassured by Turenne's retreat, thought the campaign over. So they postponed military operations until the following spring, as well as the invasion of Lorraine or Franche-Comté, and thought of wintering quietly in Alsace. To get more supplies, they spread their troops all through the province and installed them in quarters separated one from the other. Seventy thousand imperials or Brandenburgers thus took up quarters from Strasburg to Belfort in upper and lower Alsace. Frederick William installed himself at Colmar, where his wife and court joined him. The only thought now was how to speed the cold and rainy season by the help of *fêtes*.

Meanwhile Turenne was quietly marching on Lorraine with his troops. On the 29th of November the last French soldier left Alsace by the defile of Lützelstein, in the north of Zabern. The news reached Paris. The court murmured; Louvois let loose his wrath against the marshal who had failed to save Alsace; the people, who had had a momentary hope after the success at Enzheim, gave themselves up again to despair.

Turenne, not condescending to reassure public opinion — an opinion clearly against him — began to put into execution the admirable plan he had conceived. He divided his army into many detachments, placed them under the direction of experienced officers, to whom his only instructions were that they should defile from north to south along the western slopes of the Vosges; and reunite on a given day in the neighbourhood of Belfort. Thus, while the enemy dispersed itself imprudently in its winter quarters, the French army, concealing its intention by means of the Vosges chain, concentrated itself in upper Alsace. Issuing from the province near Zabern in the north, it re-entered at forty leagues from there, near Belfort in the south. Success complete, unheard of, crowned this splendid stroke of genius. Such was the devotion of the French soldiers to their chief that they accepted without murmuring the necessity of marching in the depths of winter, in a country without roads, covered with snow and intersected with torrents. From the 5th to the 27th of December, the army, at the cost of incredible fatigue, marched from Lützelstein to the pass of Belfort. There the marshal reassumed in person the command of the troops, which he had divided up to facilitate the march. On the 29th of December he came upon the first body of the enemy, near Mülhausen, and destroyed it. Horrified at this sudden appearance, in upper Alsace, of an army they had thought to be encamped in Lorraine, near Nancy or Metz, the German generals realised the mistake they had made in dispersing their forces. They tried to repair the fault by sending orders for concentration in every direction.

It was too late. Turenne advanced with lightning speed. From Mülhausen, the place of his first victory, he went northwards. Near Colmar, by Türkheim, the imperials showed fight. He attacked them furiously on the 5th of January, 1675, and put them to flight. The remnant of the enemy retired on Schlettstadt. The marshal pursued them without giving them any rest. From Schlettstadt he pursued them at the sword's point to Strasburg, making an immense number of prisoners and carrying off cannon and standards. On the 11th of January the small number of Germans who had not been put *hors de combat*, killed, or taken, during this terrible campaign, recrossed the bridge of Kehl in the greatest disorder (1675). Alsace was delivered. A formidable invasion was spared to France.[k]

This campaign prepared with such secrecy, executed with an adroitness so prudent, was ended in less than six weeks, and excited the enthusiasm of the whole of France; Louis XIV wrote to the marshal: "I hope you will

soon return, as I am most impatient to see you to demonstrate to you by word of mouth how much I appreciate the great and important services you have rendered me, in the last victory you have gained over my enemies." On the entire route the inhabitants whom Turenne had saved from the ravages of war turned out filled with admiration and gratitude, so that his return was a march of triumph until he reached St. Germain.

CONDÉ IN THE NETHERLANDS

While Turenne was victorious in foiling the invasion from the east, Condé arrested that of the north. He prevented 90,000 Spaniards and Dutch from invading Champagne. He entrenched himself at Charleroi, with the Sambre behind him, in a position where the prince of Orange dared not attack him. Condé, who did not voluntarily prolong the war of defence, pursued the enemy to his retreat and attacked the rearguard at Seneffe, near Mons (August, 1674), routing it completely, broke through the centre, and attacked and threw into disorder the remainder of the army, which was drawn up in a very strong position. When night came, he had had three horses shot under him, and the victory was still undecided. "He now," says an eye-witness, La Fare,[1] "ordered new battalions to advance and cannon to be brought forward to attack the enemy at daybreak. All who heard this order trembled, and it was very evident that he was the only one who still desired to continue the battle." The following day, the two armies separated with an equal loss of from seven to eight thousand men.

The prince of Orange, in order to prove that he had not been defeated, besieged Oudenarde. Condé proved himself the victor, and forced him to abandon this enterprise; but Grave, the last of the French conquests in Holland, opened its gates. Chamilly had defended it ninety-three days, and caused the loss of 16,000 men to the assailants.

LAST CAMPAIGNS OF TURENNE AND CONDÉ (1675 A.D.)

In the early summer (June, 1675) Turenne returned at the head of his army of the Rhine. He moved into the Palatinate. The emperor opposed him with Montecuculi, who passed for a consummate tactician. They took six weeks to follow and observe each other, and their reputations which had seemed to have reached their apogee were still more augmented by these actions. Finally they decided to come to battle near the village of Sasbach in a place chosen by Turenne; where he believed himself certain of victory, when the marshal on examining the position of a battery was struck by a stray shot, which also tore off the arm of Saint-Hilaire, lieutenant-general of the army (July 27th, 1675). The latter's son burst into tears. "It is not for me that you should weep," said Saint-Hilaire to him, "but for this great man." Turenne's death was truly a national calamity. Louis XIV, in order to show honour to the greatest military leader of his century, had him interred at St. Denis, in the royal sepulchre. But in time, the memory of the services of Turenne grew fainter, at least at court, and his reputation appeared overestimated. In 1710 in the midst of the distress of the War of the Succession, his family built a mausoleum for him in the chapel of St. Eustace. By order of the king, the ornamentations and armorial bearings were destroyed, under the pretext that they were not suitable to such a sacred spot.

The death of Turenne undid the whole result of an able campaign. The French, discouraged and seemingly seized with a panic of terror, fled in the direction of the Rhine. Montecuculi penetrated into Alsace by the bridge of Strasburg. At the same time the duke of Lorraine, Charles IV, hastened to besiege the city of Treves with 20,000 men. Créqui tried to come to his assistance, but was beaten at Consarbrück. He rushed into the town, and after several weeks of heroic defence was obliged to capitulate through the cowardice of the garrison (September, 1675). "His misfortune," says Condé, "made him a great general." Condé was right.

After the death of Turenne, Condé was sent to Alsace to arrest the progress of Montecuculi and to reanimate the confidence of the troops. He forced the imperials to raise the sieges of Zabern and Hagenau, and to recross the Rhine. This was his last victory; he never again appeared at the head of the armies, but retired to Chantilly, where he lived thereafter in the society of men of letters and philosophers. During the campaign in Holland, he sought an interview with Spinoza, and when Malebranche published his *Recherche de la vérité* he sought to meet the author. He enjoyed holding erudite conversations as much as fighting battles, taking part in them with intelligence, with ardour, and sometimes, says La Fontaine, took reason, like victory, by the throat! If in conversations on literature he was sustaining a good cause he spoke with much grace and gentleness, but if he upheld a bad one it was not wise to contradict him. Boileau was once so astonished, relates Louis Racine, by the fire of his eyes in a dispute of that nature, that he prudently yielded, and said in a low voice to his neighbour, "From now on I shall always agree with the prince whenever he is in the wrong." Bossuet says, "What a charming picture is presented to us in the avenues of Chantilly, where the fountains play unceasingly by day and by night, and our greatest poets debate with one of our greatest warriors."

EVENTS OF 1676; AFFAIRS IN SICILY

In the following year (1676) the same campaign of sieges of which Louis was so fond was recommenced. Condé and Bouchain were taken; Maestricht, besieged by the prince of Orange, was delivered; but the Germans re-entered Philippsburg, which Fay defended three months and did not give up until he ran out of powder. An unexpected victory, however, consoled France for these slight successes and reverses. The inhabitants of Messina, in Sicily, revolting against Spain, had placed themselves under the protection of Louis XIV in 1675. He sent them a fleet commanded by the duke de Vivonne, brother of Madame de Montespan, who had Duquesne under him. This illustrious sailor, born at Dieppe in 1610, had begun life as a privateer and pirate; after which he had entered the service of Sweden, where he acquired some reputation. Returning to France in order to enter the royal navy, he passed through all grades, became lieutenant-general, but could not rise any higher as he was a Protestant. On the coasts of Sicily his adversaries were De Ruyter and the Spanish. The first battle fought near the island of Stromboli was undecided (1676); a second combat off Syracuse was a complete victory; De Ruyter was killed there.

Louis XIV ordered military honours to be paid by all French ports to the vessel which transported to Holland the remains of that great naval hero. Finally Duquesne, Vivonne, and Tourville, in a last encounter at Palermo, crushed the hostile fleets. France had for a time the control of the Mediterranean (1676).

The Dutch had taken Cayenne in that same year, and ravaged the French Antilles. The vice-admiral D'Estrées armed, at his own expense, eight ships with which the king intrusted him, in consideration of reserving half the prizes. He retook Cayenne and destroyed ten ships of the enemy in the harbour of Tobago where they had thought themselves to be in security. In 1678 he took the island itself and all the Dutch factories in Senegal. The French flag now floated over the Atlantic as it did over the Mediterranean.[d]

In spite of the sufferings of his kingdom Louis XIV persisted in 1676 in the conditions he wished to impose on England and the empire, and which these two powers were unwilling to accept. He was still flattering himself over being able to keep England in the neutrality [she had committed herself to by the treaty of peace with Holland in 1674]. England's neutrality was indeed what concerned him most. He gave money to Charles II and gave orders to the ambassadors, Ruvigny and Courtin, to distribute more money, among such ministers, courtiers, and members of parliament as they could win over. But the English desired that, at any price, Louis should return his conquests or that Charles II should join the Dutch to crush him. Parliament demanded the recall of those English troops which Churchill was commanding in the army of the Rhine.



SOLDIER, TIME OF LOUIS XIV

Charles himself was only desirous of satisfying public opinion, and of conciliating that satisfaction with what he had promised Louis. He believed he would do this by assuming the rôle of a mediator. He started the idea of a congress that it was difficult for the powers to reject, and which was particularly pleasing to Holland, overcome by the burden of maritime war. During the preliminary negotiations of the congress, for which the town of Nimeguen was chosen, Charles signed a new secret treaty with Louis XIV (February, 1676), the two kings reciprocally engaging to make no separate peace with the Dutch. Louis XIV on his side overwhelmed the prince of Orange with offers that would detach him from Spain. All was useless.

The campaign of 1677 was preceded like that of 1676 by several attempts at negotiations in England and Holland. Courtin, who had replaced Ruvigny in England, wrote to Louis XIV that it was absolutely necessary to detach the prince of Orange from his allies, which might be accomplished by the intervention of Charles II. In consequence the king renewed to Orange and the states-general his former offers. He proposed to abandon the places necessary to cover Ghent and Brussels, to make a commercial treaty with Holland, and to conclude with her an eight years' truce which would give Spain the time to reflect. If, on the expiration of the delay, Spain persisted in sustaining other claims, France and Holland would divide the

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Netherlands between them. William did not absolutely repel these conditions, but replied that he could not abandon his allies without dishonour.

In order to have some faith placed in his pretended moderation, Louis signed with Charles II, on February 24th, a commercial treaty which offered some advantage to the English. Charles II insisted that France should make peace. He represented that Holland would not separate from her allies, that in the end he would be obliged to uphold her, and that he could not continually go against the sentiments and interests of his subjects.

The enterprises in Sicily had brought England's uneasiness to a climax. She already saw the ruin of her trade with the Levant, and Charles II proposed a project of peace, the basis of which was that France should keep Franche-Comté and a part of the places conquered in the Netherlands; that she should grant the Dutch a barrier and a commercial treaty; that she should indemnify the duke of Lorraine and abandon Sicily; but it remained to come to an understanding on a number of particular points and on the determination of the places that should remain to Louis XIV. The latter wished to give up only three — Charleroi, Ath, Oudenarde; and he demanded that Spain should cede him Ypres, Charlemont, and Luxemburg in exchange. He was all the more obstinate because he knew the states-general were tired of war and the damage inflicted upon commerce. He hoped to separate them from the prince of Orange, through the establishment of a barrier and some tariff concessions, but these concessions were so weak that the Dutch only laughed at them. As for the congress of Nimeguen, where the discussion of the propositions between the plenipotentiaries of the various countries began on the 6th of May, 1677, it would necessarily take too much time to put a stop to military events.[b]

CAMPAIGN OF 1677; NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

Créqui had succeeded Turenne in Germany, Luxemburg replaced Condé in the Netherlands. The former made amends for his defeat at Consarbrück by a campaign worthy of Turenne. By a succession of quick marches, which kept him constantly between the enemy and the French frontier, he covered Alsace and Lorraine against an adversary superior in numbers, defeated him at Kochersberg, between Strasburg and Zabern (October 7th, 1677), and took Freiburg from him, thus taking the war to the right bank of the Rhine. Luxemburg, who resembled more the victor of Rocroi, captured Valenciennes in conjunction with the king, where the musketeers raised formidable works in broad daylight, then Cambray, and with Monsieur, against the prince of Orange, fought the battle of Cassel, near St. Omer, which capitulated (April, 1677).[d]

The coalition was now seriously shaken. Orange was everywhere accused of small ability for leadership. At Brussels and at Ghent the people broke loose against the Dutch. Even in Holland the peace party began to be demonstrative. Louis XIV reduced his tariff by half, in October, 1677, in order to stimulate the pacific desires of the Dutch. The latter, exhausted and tired of continually paying useless subsidies to their allies, complained that the Spaniards were always behindhand in fulfilling their engagements, that the Germans never left Germany, and that the prince of Orange never found provisions or stores in Belgium.

William and his partisans replied to these complaints that the honour of the country was at stake, that the United Provinces could not abandon the allies to whom they owed their salvation, and he had still one resource.

This was to force England, which according to him was alone capable of doing it, to call a halt to the armies of Louis XIV. He went to London, where Charles II not only authorised but desired his presence, believing that it would be a convincing response to the defiances and murmurs of the nation. Scarcely had the prince arrived when he asked the hand of Mary, daughter of the duke of York. The king, who had long judged this alliance necessary, hastened to grant it. The marriage was celebrated on the 15th of November.

Charles II believed that Louis XIV would now raise no obstacle to accepting the proposals of peace; but he was mistaken — Louis rejected them, as going too far beyond those he had proposed himself, and which he already considered too moderate. The other powers, Spain and the empire, also declined them and preferred to continue the war. Charles II, having signed a treaty with the states-general on January 10th, 1678, found himself compelled to go further than he wished. He was obliged to recall the English troops serving in the French army and to prepare armaments.

Louis XIV took little notice of these demonstrations, strengthened the remainder of his armies, and decided to strike a great blow in the Netherlands, where Vauban had just retaken St. Ghislain in the depths of winter.

At the opening of the campaign of 1678, France could count on 219,000 men under arms, of whom half, it is true, were only fit for garrison service. Louvois was resolved to capture Ghent, and deceived the enemy by false demonstrations on other places, which led them to reduce the garrison at Ghent. When this had been done, he suddenly appeared under the walls of the town on the 1st of March. In less than two days 70,000 men were assembled and the siege was begun. Louis XIV, who had gone on a journey to Metz and the borders of the Maas to outwit the Spaniards, suddenly changed his direction and arrived on the 4th. The queen and the court followed closely, but stopped at Tournay. Four marshals, Humières, Luxemburg, Schomberg, and Lorges, assisted the king, Vauban pressed the works. The town, in spite of its siege and the number of watercourses and canals protecting it, was promptly surrounded. The 500 men forming the garrison declined to defend it. It surrendered the 9th, and on the 11th the castle capitulated. The army now marched upon Ypres, which it took on the 25th after eight days of entrenchment and in spite of a bloody resistance. The king, after this rapid campaign and its two important acquisitions, returned to St. Germain on the 7th of April.

Louis XIV now believed himself secure in imposing his conditions. He sent them the 9th of April to Nimeguen and to London: they were the same as before the taking of Ghent and Ypres. He allowed his plenipotentiary a month to have them accepted, but this term was further extended to the 10th of August. The latest successes of the French had had the effect that Louis XIV hoped for, that of strengthening the peace party in Holland. Amsterdam and the large towns refused to prolong these sacrifices. Charles II hastened to approve the French conditions. The Dutch, ready to agree to Louis' commercial stipulations, did not find his proposed restitution of places sufficient to form such an efficient barrier that they could oblige Spain to accept. Suddenly Villa-Hermosa (successor of Monterey in the governorship of the Spanish Netherlands) received the order from his court to lay down his arms. The Madrid cabinet, divided and exhausted, had resigned itself to the abandonment of that which had been lost, from fear of losing that which was still retained. This decision relieved the states of Holland of their last scruples. Louis XIV then put forward a condition which was

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nearly the ruin of everything. He declared that, in engaging to restore Maestricht and the other places on the Maas of which he was master, he intended to maintain garrisons in them until his ally Sweden should have recovered that which Denmark and Brandenburg had taken from her. This exigence aroused the Spaniards, disconcerted the Dutch, exasperated the English, and drove Charles II to despair. They gave up all hope of ending the war. On July 26th, Charles II signed a treaty of defensive alliance with the states-general.

Louis XIV realised the necessity of getting out of this hole, and as he did not wish to recede, he engaged Sweden to ask the withdrawal of this condition, which Charles XI generously did. The Dutch plenipotentiaries at Nimeguen, Van Beverningk, Odyk, and Van Haren asked on August 7th for a conference with the French plenipotentiaries, D'Estrades, D'Avaux, and Colbert. They debated together for more than twenty-four hours, and finally, before midnight on the 10th, they signed a treaty of peace and a treaty of commerce with France.[1]

LOUIS XIV SETTLES WITH THE COALITION (1678–1679 A.D.)

The first treaty returned to the states-general Maestricht and the little towns which Louis XIV had kept in the vicinity and in Limburg, on sole condition that free exercise of the Catholic religion should be allowed. The second re-established freedom of commerce and navigation between the two peoples.

D'Estrades brought in person the news of the treaty to Marshal de Luxemburg, encamped on the plateau of Casteaux not far from Mons, which a detachment of his troops was blockading. The prince of Orange, who had come face to face with the French army with almost equal forces (45,000 men), knew of the Peace of Nimeguen, but had not yet received official notice. He began a sharp attack upon Luxemburg, and the battle raged for six hours around the abbey of St. Denis. It was a hard fight. A regiment of French refugees fighting under the Dutch flag was literally hacked to pieces. The day remained undecisive ; and on the next the courier announcing the peace arrived in the Dutch camp, and the two armies separated.

The Dutch having signed the peace were assailed with violent recriminations on the part of their German allies, especially the elector of Brandenburg, the king of Denmark, and the bishop of Münster. But the great point for them was to obtain the definite adhesion of Spain. The latter country, exhausted and ill-governed, had long shown a great repugnance to making peace. But as soon as Charles II had attained the age of fourteen, his majority, the great personages of the kingdom forced the queen to drive Valenzuela out ; then they compelled her to accept exile herself. Don John took the title of prime minister and seized the government (June 20th, 1677). As the emperor insisted on the re-establishment of his sister, Maria Anna, Don John, almost embroiled with the court of Vienna, was compelled to lend his ear to pacific propositions.

The treaty between France and the court of Madrid was finally signed September 17th, 1678. Louis XIV restituted Courtrai, Oudenarde, Ath, and Charleroi, which the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle had given him ; also Binche, St. Ghislain, Ghent Leuw, and Puigcerda in Catalonia, which Marshal de Navailles had taken that same year. On his side he retained with definite

[1 The commercial party (the old one of De Witt) was attracted by Louis' offering commercial advantage, and thus forced the peace against the will of William of Orange.]

title St. Omer, Cassel, Aire, Bailleul, Poperinghe, Ypres, Wervicq, Warneton, Cambray, Bouchain, Valenciennes, Condé, Bavay, Mauberge, and the whole of Franche-Comté. The treaty of 1668 had in reality only been a truce, giving France advance posts in the heart of Belgium and leaving Spain with other places, isolated spots in the midst of French possessions, particularly on the borders of the Schelde. The treaty of 1678 established a much more regular border, by assuring France a series of strongholds bound one to the other, and closing all avenues to the kingdom from Dunkirk to the Maas, and leaving the Spanish Netherlands another series of places which offered the same advantages though in a less degree. The Treaty of Nimeguen was, in spite of a few restitutions demanded by Europe as a guarantee of peace, one of the most glorious and most advantageous that France had ever signed.

The emperor and the empire remained to be reckoned with. They were left out of the Dutch and Spanish treaties. They began by protesting and continuing the war. The imperial army, without stopping at the negotiations of Nimeguen, undertook, under the duke of Lorraine, to retake Freiburg in Breisgau, and to penetrate into Alsace. In May it appeared on the Rhine between Offenburg and Wilstett. Créqui was again charged with protecting Freiburg; and conducted a campaign which was as fortunate as it was able, and which placed a seal upon his fame. The Germans, reduced to powerlessness at every turn, quickly ended the campaign. The emperor, abandoned by the Dutch and embroiled with the Spaniards, ended by desiring peace. The possession of Philippsburg indemnified him for the loss of Strasburg. The princes of the empire, with the exception of a few in the north, refused to pursue the now objectless war. The subsidies of Spain and Holland had ceased. Leopold consented to a treaty which was signed January 15th, 1679, between the emperor, the empire, and France. The whole difficulty centred around the allies, whom Austria refused to abandon and for whom she demanded satisfaction. The king made a few concessions; but he would not give up Lorraine to Duke Charles except in retaining Nancy and four military routes. The duke rejected these conditions. Louis XIV also reserved to himself the right of passage through eight towns of the empire, to join the duchy of Cleves, and to continue the struggle with the elector of Brandenburg.

The imperial princes, interested in keeping their conquests over the Swedes, were the only ones who would not lay down their arms. They did not have to wait long to see themselves forced to do so, for Louis XIV was not willing at any price to abandon unfortunate allies whose actions had been of service to him. Pecuniary indemnity served to interest the dukes of Brunswick, Lüneburg, and the bishop of Münster. The elector of Brandenburg refused this sort of compensation. Créqui entered the duchy of Cleves, occupied the county of Mark, [the two possessions of the elector by the Rhine] and the town of Lippstadt beyond the Rhine, and advanced as far as the Weser, whose passage he forced June 30th, near Minden. The elector, incapable of continuing this unequal struggle, had on the eve of that day made his submission. His envoy signed at St. Germain a treaty by which he restored to the Swedes that which he had taken from them, stipulating a rectification of the Pomeranian frontier, and an indemnity of 300,000 crowns which France paid. The king of Denmark was the last to treat. He restored the towns he had taken, but received no pecuniary indemnity. These successive treaties, consequent upon those of Nimeguen, re-established things in Germany almost upon the footing of the Treaty of Westphalia.

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All the powers had been weakened in the eight years' war. Holland alone escaped almost intact from the storm which had threatened to destroy her. As for Louis XIV, he emerged from the struggle aggrandised and triumphant. He triumphed all the more in that he owed nothing to anyone —not even to the king of England, who, having shown himself equally incapable of making war or peace, now raised against himself as much scorn in France as hatred in his own state. If France had suffered considerably from a prolonged struggle which demanded enormous sacrifices, she had displayed resources superior to those of any other power, although Holland had shown herself the richer in proportion. France had struggled single-handed against the empire. The king's proud device, "*Nec pluribus impar*," was justified. The courtiers and the soldiers were unanimous in granting him the title of Louis the Great; an equestrian statue representing him in the costume of a Roman emperor was raised a short time after in Paris in a square which was called the Place des Victoirés.[b]





CHAPTER XXI

THE HEIGHT AND DECLINE OF THE BOURBON MONARCHY

[1679–1715 A.D.]

> Louis had many royal qualities—a noble presence; manners full of grace and dignity; an elocution at once majestic and seductive; unwearied assiduity in business; a luminous understanding; an instinctive taste for whatever is magnificent in thought or action; and a genuine zeal for the welfare of his people. But for the high office of moulding and conducting the policy of the greatest of the nations of the civilised world, he wanted three indispensable gifts — an education so liberal as to have revealed to him the real interests and resources of his kingdom; the faculty by which a true statesman, in the silence of all established precedents, originates measures adapted to the innovations, whether progressive or immediate, of his times; and that dominion over passion and appetite which is the one essential condition of all true mental independence. Without such knowledge, such invention, and such self-control, Louis could not really think, and therefore could not really act for himself. — STEPHEN.

AFTER Nimeguen, Louis XIV was at the climax of his fortunes. He had no equal among the other sovereigns of Europe. If he had not realised all his ambitions, if he had made political mistakes and military mistakes he had none the less shown a vigour, a spirit of continuity, a power of calculation and often a rectitude of judgment which placed him far above contemporary princes. He was served by great men, and he had always known how to direct them and appropriate their work to himself, although he had sometimes conceded too much to Louvois, and yielded too much to the desire to display in war the brilliance of his court. He continually saw everything and did everything himself in order to train himself by work, and, as he said, by this means to complete his ideas.

In 1679 France, instead of returning to her ancient peace footing, preserved an effective force of 140,000 men, part of which was so organised as to be able to take the field immediately. The maintenance of this armament had for its object the support of certain pretensions relative to the regulation of the frontiers. At Nimeguen the territories ceded on either side had not been delimited in a definite manner. Louis XIV and Louvois calculated on profiting by this circumstance to make new acquisitions. Louvois was ambitious of deriving as much advantage from peace as from war.

Louvois no longer directed military affairs alone. For a long time he had been encroaching on the office of the secretary of state for foreign affairs. Pomponne, who complained of this and who lacked the authority and energy necessary to resist him, was disgraced. His successor was Colbert's own brother, Colbert de Croissy, formerly ambassador to London and plenipotentiary to the congress of Aix-la-Chapelle and Nimeguen; but Louvois' influence in diplomacy remained none the less preponderant.

ACQUISITION OF FRONTIER PLACES (1679–1681 A.D.)

The regulation of the frontiers on the side of the Spanish Netherlands was debated in a conference which was opened at Courtrai in the month of December, 1679. During the long discussions which occupied it Louvois' ambition was particularly directed towards the eastern frontier, where he could proceed by other means than diplomatic arguments. As early as 1679 he occupied Homburg and Bitche, dependencies of Lorraine which had been pledged by Duke Charles IV to the electors of Treves and Mainz. He made the parliament of Besançon pronounce two decrees, the one of September 8th, 1679, which declared the reunion to Franche-Comté of the castellanies of Clermont, Châtelet, and Blamont — that is to say, more than eighty villages, forming part of the principality of Montbéliard, the property of the dukes of Würtemberg; the other, dated the 31st of August, 1680, declared the reunion of the principality itself.

At the parliament of Metz Louvois instituted a *chambre de réunion*, intended to search out all the dependencies of the Three Bishoprics, that is to say, the territories which might be claimed as their fiefs by any title whatsoever. This question of dependencies had been the subject of old disputes between France and the empire. Louvois resolved to settle them finally by simple judiciary decrees and without beginning vexatious lawsuits with the empire and the German princes. He drew up himself, or caused to be drawn up under his own eyes, detailed instructions for the king's *procureur* of the *chambre de réunion* at Metz. The result of this inquiry was to reunite to France about eighty fiefs. The county of Zweibrücken was vacant and several competitors were disputing for it; Louvois seized it in virtue of a very ancient feudal right found in the title deeds of the bishopric of Metz. The king of Sweden, Charles XI, one of the principal claimants, protested; he was offered a sum of money to indemnify him. He refused to sell his rights and abandoned France, whose ally he had been in the late wars, to throw himself on the side of her enemies.

Another dispute — less old, since it dated only from the Treaty of Westphalia, but not less important — had for object the empire's jurisdiction in Alsace and the territories of ten towns reunited to France in 1648. Louis XIV had never recognised this jurisdiction; he had imposed oaths on the towns of Alsace which reserved his own rights and had taken little account of their privileges when these inconvenienced his armies. He had contented himself with conceding them, after the war, certain abatements of taxes under the name of compensation. In 1680 the sovereign council of Alsace, instituted by Mazarin at Ensisheim and afterwards transferred to Breisach, decreed the suppression of all imperial jurisdictions in the province and proceeded to reunions of territories, similar to those of the Three Bishoprics.

The reunion of Strasburg which was the most considerable was accomplished in another fashion. Strasburg, a free imperial city, had given good grounds for complaint, inasmuch as she had observed her neutrality but ill

during the last war; she had on several occasions delivered the bridge over the Rhine to the imperial troops. Louvois began by withdrawing certain neighbouring territories from the jurisdiction of Strasburg; then, eluding the vigilance of the imperial troops, he sent into Alsace 35,000 men, whom he scattered, but in such a manner as to be able to assemble them again at a given point. He watched for a favourable opportunity. The arrival in the city of an officer of the emperor having furnished him with the pretext he was seeking, he caused the approaches and the passage of the Rhine to be suddenly occupied by his troops during the night of the 27–28th of September, 1681. The inhabitants, taken by surprise, demanded explanations. The French resident knew nothing; the officer who led the troops referred them to Montclar, the military commandant of Alsace. The latter informed them that he had orders to obtain their recognition of the sovereignty of France; but that otherwise their municipal, religious, and other privileges would be preserved.



François Michel le Tellier, Marquis de Louvois
(1641–1691)

The magistrates wrote to the diet and to the emperor to notify them of the extremity to which they found themselves reduced; their letters were intercepted. As they were not in a position to offer the least resistance they demanded to be allowed to consult the people. This consultation could be only a matter of form; acquiescence was a matter of necessity. On the 30th the city capitulated. Louvois' first act was to restore the cathedral to the Catholic clergy, whilst guaranteeing religious liberty to the Protestants. Without loss of time the construction of a citadel, barracks, and entrenched cantonments was taken in hand, less for security against the inhabitants than to oppose a powerful bulwark to the empire. On the 24th of October Louis XIV came to make a triumphal entry into his new acquisition.

On the 30th of September, 1681, the day of the entry of a French corps into Strasburg, another entered Casale. Louvois had long aimed at dominating Piedmont and through Piedmont Italy. Casale, added to Pinerolo, should furnish him the means. Casale was a possession of the duke of Mantua. This duke was a debauched and prodigal prince, in pressing need of money.

On the 8th of July, 1681, a treaty was secretly signed at Mantua, between the duke and a French agent who had no official character, the abbé Morel. Some troops had been collected in Dauphiné and at Pinerolo. A passage for these troops was requested of the duchess of Savoy [widow of Charles Emmanuel and regent for the infant duke], with the threat that it would be insisted on. Finally, on the 30th of September, Catinat, who had been at Pinerolo incognito for several months, took possession not only of

the citadel but of the castle and town of Casale in the name of Louis XIV.

Henceforth Piedmont was shut in between two French fortresses and Louvois assumed towards her the tone of a master. But the regent of Savoy resisted with extreme vigour; it was almost necessary to employ violence to obtain from her a free passage for the French troops passing from Pinerolo to Montferrat. Finally, in order to save the independence of Savoy, she accepted the condition of marrying her son to Mademoiselle d'Orléans, Monsieur's daughter (in 1684). Louis XIV thought that this marriage would complete the deliverance into his hands of Piedmont and secure him the entrance into Italy. He believed that the other Italian states were now condemned to submit to his dictation. The contrary was the case. Italy kept silence; but as soon as Victor Amadeus found an opportunity of escaping from France, which he detested, he had no difficulty in raising the peninsula against her.

The reunions declared in the Three Bishoprics and Alsace, and the occupation of Strasburg and Casale, did not make Louvois forget the conferences of Courtrai. The Spaniards showed in these conferences as much ill-will as weakness and sought to prolong them. They had pledged themselves to hand over Charlemont in exchange for Dinant, which was to be restored to them. They did not do so until 1681 after an infinite amount of chicanery. Louvois profited by these delays; he had the address to negotiate with the bishop of Liège, to whom Dinant belonged, a direct cession of that town to France and made use of this cession as an authority for not surrendering it to Spain. Almost immediately afterwards he occupied the little county of Chiny in Luxemburg, in virtue of an ancient title of the bishopric of Metz. He sent troops thither to make what was called a "pacific execution"; the country was reunited to the crown, and the work of hunting up his dependencies was taken in hand.



MARQUIS ABRAHAM DUQUESNE
(1610–1688)

At last, on the 4th of August, 1681, Louis XIV notified the conference of Courtrai of his claims. They comprehended the castellany of Alost, the towns of Grammont, Ninove, Lessines, and various territories. He offered, it is true, to exchange those towns and territories which might be necessary for the defence of Brussels, in return for "equivalents." The Spaniards protesting against these pretensions, Louvois increased the French troops of the county of Chiny, established a sort of blockade round Luxemburg, seized the first difficulty which arose in consequence as a *casus belli*, pressed the blockade still closer during the winter, and made every preparation to make himself master of the place in the spring.

Nothing was more popular in France than this policy of aggrandisement. Men took little trouble to find out whether it were just or safe. It was enough that it should flatter national feeling and the military passions then greatly over-excited.

PREPARATIONS FOR A SECOND COALITION (1681-1682 A.D.)

But if France thus made herself the accomplice of the enterprises and the ambition of the king, it was not possible for Europe to content herself with being a passive spectator. Whilst Spain was discussing and protesting at Courtrai, Germany was discussing and protesting at Ratisbon and Frankfort. Sweden was irritated, Italy discontented, Holland embarrassed. All the powers showed themselves attentive and anxious. None was strong enough to struggle alone; the question was whether, after a coalition dissolved at Nimeguen they would succeed in again drawing together and coming to an understanding.

Louis XIV had reason to fear it. Therefore, in spite of the disdainful majesty of his diplomacy, he endeavoured to make some of them advances of a nature calculated to flatter. The year which followed the Treaty of Nimeguen he married the eldest of his nieces, a very young girl, the eldest daughter of Monsieur and of Henrietta of England, to the king of Spain, Charles II. The young princess Marie Louise was the victim of policy and obliged to accept a union repugnant to her. The same year the dauphin, aged scarcely eighteen years, married a princess of Bavaria. The king was eager to secure the elector of Bavaria, who had been faithful to him since 1670; he hoped to strengthen himself in Germany by this alliance. The marriage of Monsieur's second daughter to the duke of Savoy, Victor Amadeus, which was concluded soon after, in 1684, had for object the extension of French influence in Italy.

Dutch patriotism had been on the watch against the ambition of Louis XIV. William had no difficulty in seizing the weapons the king gave him. He denounced French policy to Europe in a host of pamphlets which circulated everywhere. The answers which Louis XIV in his turn circulated, the language which he dictated to his envoys, did not bring reassurance.

The prince of Orange believed that in order to form another stronger and more solid coalition it was needful to provide a centre and a head. The centre should be Holland; the head himself. He began by joining with the king of Sweden, Charles XI, who, despoiled of his pretensions to the duchy of Zweibrücken, was the more irritated against France because he had been her ally. Sweden and Holland signed a treaty at the Hague, September 30th, 1681, to guarantee those of Westphalia and Nimeguen. The two princes solicited adhesions everywhere; they obtained that of the emperor on the 28th of February, 1682. Louis XIV did not choose to wait till the coalition should have grown or till William had succoured Luxemburg. In March he gave his troops the order to withdraw from the positions they occupied before the town and abandoned his claims. That the coalition was formidable is proved by the fact that Spain entered into it on the second of May and that this example was followed in the course of the year by an infinity of German princes, even by the elector of Bavaria.

In 1682 Louis XIV had stopped his progress before Luxemburg and had submitted his claims to the arbitration of the king of England who had already been mediator at Nimeguen. He had recoiled before the threat of a coalition

and the indignation of the Germans, although in this direction he had secured the alliance of the elector of Brandenburg and of the king of Denmark, both recently his enemies but disposed to serve him since he was on bad terms with Sweden. In spite of the generosity he affected he seized an opportunity which presented itself to make the prince of Orange feel his vengeance. William had a lawsuit with the duchess de Nemours ; the king gave the order to occupy his principality. The town of Orange was dismantled and its sovereignty declared to have devolved on the crown (August, 1682).[1] The prince sent Heinsius (the grand pensionary) to make complaint at Paris ; he could obtain nothing and preserved keen resentment in consequence.

The empire through the diet at Ratisbon and the congress of Frankfort claimed various restitutions from France. However, Germany being then greatly threatened by the Turks, the majority of the princes restrained their irritation ; they had even tried to obtain the king's support and assistance. Louis XIV held out hopes to them, but solely for the purpose of resuming in the empire the influence which he had had there at the time of the league of the Rhine, and in order to play the part of saviour.

In 1683 Louis organised practice camps in Flanders, on the Saar, in Alsace, and on the Saône. On the 1st of September, just as Vienna was thought to be on the point of succumbing [to the Turks], 35,000 men entered Belgium. The Spaniards protested, retaliated by occupying French territories in their turn, and on the 26th of October launched a declaration of war. The French invested Courtrai which was dismantled, entered both it and Dixmude without difficulty and bombarded Luxemburg. In March, 1684, Humières bombarded Oudenarde. In April Créqui, accompanied by Vauban, besieged Luxemburg which, strong in natural fortifications, was also heroically defended ; but the genius of Vauban and the great resources of which he disposed triumphed over these difficulties and this resistance. On the 4th of June the garrison surrendered. Créqui then marched on Treves and filled up the town moats, in defiance of the elector's protest. At the same time Schomberg assisted the elector of Cologne, an ally of France, to restore his authority at Liège, which had shaken it off. Finally a French division under the command of Marshal de Bellefonds was sent into Catalonia.

Meantime Spain, in no condition to continue the war alone, was asking the Dutch and the emperor for their support or mediation. The struggle which the Germans were continuing in Hungary against the Turks compelled the powers to postpone their plans for a coalition. The Dutch assumed the character of mediators. Louis XIV again assumed an attitude of generosity and accepted their proposals on condition that they should recall a body of troops furnished by them to the governor of the Spanish Netherlands. A twenty years' truce was signed at Ratisbon — with Spain on the 11th of August, with the empire on the 15th. France kept Luxemburg, Beaumont, Bouvines, and Chimay, on consideration of restoring Courtrai and Dixmude. The empire recognised all the reunions effected, even that of Strasburg and of Kehl, on the sole condition that Louis XIV should abandon Tökely and the Hungarian rebels.[2]

[1 It must be remembered however that the great opponent of France took his title from the principality of Orange, which is now in the department of Vaucluse by the Rhone, in southern France.]

[2 Tökely was a Hungarian magnate — a Calvinist, who, implicated in a conspiracy, had aroused a portion of Hungary against the emperor. Louis XIV supported him in his war.]

RELATIONS WITH TURKS AND BERBERS

During this time the Turks were again beginning to threaten Europe. Led by the Köprilis, viziers who were also great men, they had fallen on Poland, whose divisions seemed to deliver her up to them as a prey; and as they were suzerains of Transylvania they incessantly fomented revolts in Hungary against Austria. Louis XIV, in order to keep the empire's forces in check, took care to constantly favour the disturbances in Hungary and to maintain good relations with the porte.

The Turks were too proud and too distrustful; commercial privileges, annulled or evaded by the hostility of the pashas, were nothing but a cause of perpetual dispute. The piracies committed by the Berbers, tributaries of the grand seignior, were another. In 1681 some corsairs of Tripoli, pursued by Duquesne, took refuge under the protection of the pasha of Chios. Duquesne required that they should be delivered up to him and on the pasha's refusal cannonaded the town. The sultan sent his fleet to Chios; the French ambassador, Guilleragues, only succeeded in appeasing him by considerable presents. The following year Louis XIV, displeased with the divan, gave orders to Duquesne to punish the pirates of Algiers.

A shipbuilder of Bayonne, Renau, had just conceived the idea of a new form of vessel for use in bombardments. Duquesne made trial of it at Algiers and the trial was a complete success. The town was bombarded a first time August 30th, 1682, then twice more in June and August, 1683. The Algerians by way of reprisals set the European prisoners at the mouth of their cannons; the dey, who would have yielded, was put to death and replaced by one of his officers. The lack of ammunition, for these maritime bombardments were extremely costly, compelled Duquesne to retire before he had brought the enemy to terms. However, the Algerians ended by negotiating. Tourville, whom the admiral had left to cruise about with a squadron in sight of their port, signed the peace April 25th, 1684. The Algerians made reparation, restored the merchandise and captives they had carried off, engaged not to countenance other pirates, and gave all the guarantees required of them. Morocco had not expected to be attacked. In 1682 it had granted all the stipulations desirable, renewed the treaty of 1631, and consented to the institution or reorganisation of French consulates.[b]

Meanwhile a Christian city had been treated as though it were a den of pirates. The Genoese had sold arms and powder to the Algerians, and had built in their shipyards four war vessels for Spain, which had none of her own. Louis XIV forbade the Genoese to equip these ships; and, on their refusal, Duquesne and Seignelay in a few days threw 14,000 shells into the city, destroying a number of the palaces of Genoa la Superba (May, 1684). The doge had to come to Versailles to implore the king's pardon, in spite of an ancient law requiring the chief magistrate never to absent himself from the city. He was asked what was the strangest thing he saw at Versailles: "To see myself there," he replied.[c]

The significance of this humbling of Genoa is that this power was forced to abandon Spain, with which it had so long been in alliance, and become dependent upon France. Such a turn of affairs on the Mediterranean, added to the aggressions already made on the frontier, made war inevitable; but the old ally of Francis I, the Turk, was again the friend of the most Christian king. The emperor was too busy on his eastern frontier to pay attention to the west; and the accession of James II in England made William of Orange hesitate to act. In another year, however, the situation had changed.[a]

SECOND COALITION : THE LEAGUE OF AUGSBURG (1686 A.D.)

In the first months of 1686 various treaties were signed between Holland and Sweden, Sweden and Brandenburg, Brandenburg and the empire. All these states pledged themselves to guarantee the treaties of Westphalia, of Nimeguen, and of Ratisbon, and protested against the reunions effected by Louis XIV. On the 9th of July the emperor, Spain, and Sweden as members of the empire, the elector of Bavaria, the circles of Bavaria and of Franconia, the princes of Saxony and others besides, formed at Augsburg a secret league, ostensibly for the preservation of the twenty years' truce, in reality to put an army of 60,000 men into the field against France. The league was to last for three years unless it were prorogued, and the command was to be given to the elector of Bavaria. The reason or pretext was the claim brought forward by Louis XIV to some territories which he maintained should belong to Madame as the heritage from her father, the elector palatine, who had died the preceding year.

William of Orange was again the soul of this coalition, although for the moment he affected to remain outside it; the king of Sweden was its principal promoter. The league was soon completed by the adhesion of Victor Amadeus and the other princes of Italy, though this was secret. The league in spite of very heterogeneous elements acquired a cohesive force which was quite new and held itself in readiness to take the offensive as soon as required.

Louis had flattered himself on converting the twenty years' truce into a definite peace, but the diet of Ratisbon formally refused this in January, 1687. He felt that he could not take a step without unchaining the tempest. Nevertheless he braved the pope and picked a quarrel with him.[b]

The Catholic ambassadors at Rome had stretched the right of asylum and immunity assumed from all time, and with reason, for their residences to the quarter in which they lived. Innocent XI wished to abolish this abuse which turned half the city into a den of criminals. He obtained without difficulty the consent of the other kings, but Louis, irritated against the pontiff on account of the *régal* (see chapter XIX) replied with haughtiness, that he had never acted on the example of others, and that it was for him to serve as an example. He sent the marquis de Lavardin with 800 armed *gentilshommes* to maintain himself in the possession of this unjust privilege. The pope excommunicated the ambassador; the king seized Avignon.

The matter was straightened out under Innocent XI's successor, but this pontiff conceived an intense dislike for him that was not without influence in the war of 1688. The occasion of this war was indeed the pope's opposition to France's candidate for the archiepiscopal see of Cologne, the cardinal von Fürstenberg who had thrown open the gates of Strasburg. He was elected by a majority of the chapter, fifteen votes against nine for his opponent, Clement of Bavaria. Nevertheless Innocent gave the latter the investiture.[c] Louis XIV had the papal nuncio put in prison and the Venaissin occupied by one of his officers, La Trousse, who expelled the vice-legate.

War was now begun against Europe and against the pope. Louis resolved to occupy Kaiserslautern and the cities of the Rhine. The dauphin, then twenty-six years old, was put at the head of the army of Germany. To assist him he was given Marshal de Duras, nephew of Turenne, and as lieutenant-generals Catinat, Montclar, Vauban, and Chamlay. "In sending you to command my army," Louis XIV said to him, "I give you opportunities of

exhibiting your merit; go and show it to all Europe, so that when I come to die it may not be noticed that the king is dead."

Open preparations had been avoided, but the dispositions had been so well taken that a few days sufficed to collect the troops before Philippsburg. The necessary artillery was drawn from Strasburg and Breisach, and the siege began the 27th of September; whilst Humières occupied the district of Liège with a first division, Boufflers with a second invaded the Cis-Rhenish Palatinate and seized Kaiserslautern, and finally Huxelles entered Speier with a third. Philippsburg was defended by the graf von Starhemberg. Vauban pressed the siege with his usual prudence and vigour in spite of the difficulties offered by the marshes which formed a girdle round the place. These difficulties were still further augmented by continual rains and a disastrous season.

Louvois requested the electors of Mainz and Treves to allow him to occupy Mainz and Coblenz. He had no idea of using moderation. The elector of Mainz admitted a French garrison into the capital. The markgraf of Baden-Durlach surrendered Durlach and Pforzheim. Heilbronn and Heidelberg opened their gates. But the elector of Treves refused to allow Coblenz to be occupied. The town was bombarded by Boufflers under Louvois' orders; the elector persisted in his refusal. Philippsburg capitulated on the 29th of October. The siege was murderous, especially for the engineers whom Vauban calls the "martyrs of the infantry." The siege of Mannheim was proceeded to without delay and occupied only a few days; the ill-paid soldiers of the elector palatine forced the governor to deliver up the town and citadel. Frankenthal surrendered in less than forty-eight hours and the French beheld themselves complete masters of the Palatinate.

Hitherto the French had had only inadequate garrisons to contend with. The only hostile force which had appeared was a corps of 3,000 men from Brandenburg which had entered Cologne under the orders of Schomberg, one of the refugee French Protestants. But Louvois permitted himself no illusions: all Germany was to be agitated in the ensuing campaign and if William of Orange, the soul of the league of Augsburg, had not taken the field, it was because he was at that very moment (November, 1688) taking possession of the throne of England. On the 26th of November war was declared between France and Holland. It did in fact exist between France and the emperor and the empire, although the official declaration of the diet of Ratisbon did not take place till somewhat later, the 24th of January, 1689.

THE REVOLUTION IN ENGLAND (1688 A.D.)

The English Revolution gave the greatest hopes to the league of Augsburg and the European coalition. Charles II had died in 1685. James II (the duke of York), who succeeded him, joined to the courage of a tried soldier more pride and decision of character. But his mediocrity, which afterwards impressed everyone in France, was early pointed out by the French envoys to the court of London. He resumed the projects formed before the Treaty of Dover—that is to say, he aimed at restoring Catholicism in his dominions, giving himself a permanent army, and suppressing the laws, such as that of *habeas corpus*, which seemed to encroach on his prerogative. These plans obliged him to seek the alliance of Louis XIV.

Now this alliance harmed more than it served him. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes alarmed the English Protestants, who believed, or affected to believe, that with a Catholic sovereign allied to Louis XIV their

faith was in peril. James II addressed to all the foreign courts, as well as to his own subjects, declarations in which he blamed the persecution of the Huguenots; nowhere did he obtain credence.[b]

The Revolution which overthrew this "tyranny," and gave William III the throne of James II, was more than a mere substitution of royal personages. It changed royalty by divine right into royalty by consent, and founded the English constitutional or parliamentary monarchy. A new right, that of peoples, now arose in modern society, in the face of the absolute right of kings, which for two centuries had ruled them, and which was now finding in France its most glorious personification. There was nothing astonishing in the fearful struggle which now broke out between France and England. There was something more than two opposing interests; there were two different political ideas. In the sixteenth century, France had defended Protestantism and the liberties of Europe. In the seventeenth she threatened the conscience of the people and the independence of the states.

The rôle which France abandoned England now took up; she was to be the centre of all the coalitions against the house of Bourbon, as France had been the centre of resistance to the house of Austria. This political change upset all the conditions of war. While Louis was keeping England neutral by pensioning her kings, France had no one to fear on the continent, for, protected by the Pyrenees, the Alps, and the sea, she could face the Rhine and fight with both hands, without having to look behind. England now openly joined the league (1689). It was now necessary, not only to have armies on the Schelde, the Rhine, and in the Alps, but also fleets on the ocean, and in the most distant seas. It was the double effort that exhausted France.[c]

WAR OF THE LEAGUE OF AUGSBURG (1688–1697 A.D.)

War was declared on France by the diet of the empire, in the month of January, 1689; by England and Holland, in March; in April, by the elector of Brandenburg, and in May by Spain.[b]

Louis had, to oppose the coalition, 350,000 soldiers and 264 vessels or frigates. Single-handed against these princes, badly united among themselves, and obeying each other but badly, he mapped out a plan at the same time simple and bold. To overthrow William III would end the war at one stroke. Louis XIV intrusted a fleet to James II to aid him to remount his throne. Spain and Savoy were the two most feeble states of the league; the king turned against them the majority of his forces. On this side he attacked; on the Rhine, the whole of whose left bank almost to Coblenz he was occupying, he assumed the defensive, calculating that the Turks, whom he had just succeeded in inducing to break off negotiations with the emperor, would give that prince so much occupation on the lower Danube that France would have no fear of his sending a large force to the Rhine. Turenne, Condé, and Duquesne were dead; but Louis found able leaders to replace them — Luxemburg, Catinat, Boufflers, Lorges, and Tourville.

Attempts to restore James II (1689–1692 A.D.)

The war in favour of James II was fortunate at first. A squadron of thirteen large vessels carried the prince in May, 1689, to Ireland, Catholic like himself, and always groaning under the yoke of England. Convoys of troops, arms, and munitions left Le Havre, Brest, and Rochefort, protected by Château Renaud, D'Estrées, and Tourville. The English and Dutch

attempted to head them off. Château Renaud defeated one of these fleets in Bantry Bay; Tourville with 78 sail attacked their fleet off Beachy Head on the Sussex coast. Sixteen of the enemies' ships were sunk or burned on the shore, July 10th, 1690. This brilliant victory gave the empire of the ocean to Louis XIV for some time. But James II did not know how to follow it up. He had lost precious time at the siege of Londonderry, and William III attacked him on the Boyne, July 11th, 1690. The Irish, with their king, fled at the first attack; the French alone made some resistance. A regiment of Calvinist refugees under Marshal de Schomberg were especially prominent in routing the French. James II returned to France.



ANNE HILARION DE COTENTIN, COMTE DE TOURVILLE
(1642–1701)

Louis XIV now prepared a descent on England itself; 20,000 men were assembled between Cherbourg and La Hogue; 300 transports were made ready at Brest. Tourville was to escort them with the 44 vessels he commanded and 30 others which D'Estrées was bringing him from Toulon. But the wind changed, and the Mediterranean fleet could not arrive in time. Louis XIV, accustomed to force a victory, and reckoning that a number of the English captains would pass to him, ordered his admiral to go seek the enemy, 99 sail strong. This was the battle of La Hogue, May 29th, 1692. Although there was no defection, Tourville held his own victoriously, for ten hours, against the Anglo-Dutch, who in spite of their numbers were more badly battered than the French. But it was impossible the next day to renew this heroic temerity: Tourville would at least have made a glorious retreat if he had had a port behind him; the breakwater at Cherbourg was not built at that time. He gave the signal to retire to Brest and St. Malo. Seven of his vessels gained the former port; the rest of the fleet entered the navigable channel off the Cotentin shore; twenty-two passed through the race at Blanchard and arrived at St. Malo, but the tide reached low ebb, and the rest were prevented from following. Three stopped in front of Cherbourg and their captains, unable to defend them, set them on fire. Twelve took refuge in the harbour of La Hogue, which was no better prepared to offer shelter.

Tourville landed his guns, his stores, and his fittings, and on the approach of the English applied the torch to the hulls of his ships. The enemy could not boast of having taken a single one. This was the first blow dealt to the French navy, but it is not true, as has often been said, that it was its tomb, for the next year France was able to oppose equal if not superior fleets to the English and the Dutch. At any rate the re-establishment of the Stuarts in England was becoming an impossibility and the most important part of Louis XIV's plan had fallen through.[c]

DEVASTATION OF THE PALATINATE (1688-1689 A.D.)

The attention of Louis XIV and Louvois was especially directed to the side of Germany where France would have to face the coalition. Philippsburg and the Palatinate having been occupied, Louvois wished to remain on the defensive. France was already secured by a girdle of towns, of which the principal were Hüningen, Belfort, Landau, Philippsburg, and Mont-Royal, an important position on the Moselle which had been occupied and fortified after having been taken under various pretexts from the elector of Treves. Louvois resolved to demolish all the towns beyond it and to ravage the country for a great distance so as to oppose a desert to the enemy.



RUINS OF HEIDELBERG CASTLE
(Destroyed by order of Louvois)

Louvois according to his custom kept his plan a profound secret. He began by giving Montclar orders to blow up the walls of Heilbronn and ravage Würtemberg as far as the Danube (November and December, 1688). This order being executed he gave one to destroy the castle and town of Heidelberg ; 432 houses, delivered over to the flames, were demolished or suffered enormous damage. Mannheim was likewise razed.

Devastation, savage and systematic, such as had not been seen even in the Thirty Years' War, was spread over the Palatinate and the territories of the three ecclesiastical electors. The sinister glow of conflagrations lighted the passage of the French troops. Trees and vines were cut down ; palaces, temples, convents, and hospitals were destroyed. At Heidelberg the castle of the elector palatine, was destroyed like the rest. At Mannheim the very stones of the ruins were thrown into the Rhine. A crowd of unfortunates dying of cold and hunger and reduced to expatriating themselves streamed along the snow-covered roads. The greater part, refusing the shelter offered to them in Alsace or Lorraine, went to beg from the enemies of France and still further to raise their indignation against her. This treatment was meted out to the elector palatine without any scruple.

There was at first some hesitation to sacrifice Speier and Worms, but Duras and Chamlay represented that it was important not to spare them. In consequence Worms and Oppenheim were burned on the 31st of May, 1689, and Speier on the 1st of June. Bingen also had its turn. The fire spared neither churches nor palaces. All, say the memoirs of the times, was burned and reburned. The cathedral of Speier contained the tombs of eight

emperors; the tombs were burned and the ashes they enclosed thrown to the winds. Treves had been condemned; Louis XIV withdrew the order as though frightened at the general cry called forth by this work of destruction. A concert of recriminations rose against him. Whilst he accused the Catholic princes of supporting the Protestant states, Europe reproached him for allying himself with the Turks and carrying on a war more cruel and more barbarous than the Turks themselves. English caricatures called him the Most Christian Turk.[b]

The king's discontent with these actions might have been the prelude of a disgrace had not Louvois died of apoplexy in July, 1691. He was replaced by his son, Barbezieux, who, with many more deficiencies, had none of his good qualities. The duke de Lorges, Turenne's nephew, and successor to Marshal de Duras in 1691, contented himself with covering Alsace against the imperials, who finding themselves as in a desert in the Palatinate could not subsist there. Therefore the war remained defensive on the Rhine, and the great blows were struck elsewhere.

The War in Savoy and Piedmont (1689–1693 A.D.)

Catinat was now commanding in Italy. This general, without birth, had raised himself by force of merit. Like Vauban, whose friend he was, he joined civic virtues to military qualities and by his wise and methodic tactics resembled, although slightly, Turenne. He was opposed by Victor Amadeus, duke of Savoy. In order to bring his adversary to decisive action before the arrival of the German troops, Catinat devastated the fields of Piedmont, cut the trees, tore up the vines, and burned the villages. Victor Amadeus could not contain himself in the face of these ravages, and gave battle at Staffarda near Saluzzo on August 18th, 1690. He lost 4,000 men while the French numbered scarcely 500 killed. Savoy, Nice, and the greater part of Piedmont found themselves in the power of the French. But a relative of the duke, Prince Eugene, whose services Louis XIV had refused and who then had offered them to Austria, arrived with strong reinforcements. The French returned to France, whither the Piedmontese followed them. Dauphiné suffered a cruel retaliation for the burning of the Palatinate and the ravages in Piedmont (1692). Catinat, however, recrossed the Alps and a second battle took place near Marsaglia, a few leagues from Staffarda, on October 4th, 1693. It was as disastrous for Victor Amadeus as the first had been. Nothing now remained to him but Turin, and Catinat would have taken this also if the ministry had not reduced his forces. All that he could do was to keep his conquests.

The War in the Netherlands (1690–1692 A.D.)

Luxemburg, posthumous son of that count de Bouteville whom Richelieu had had decapitated, began his military career under the Great Condé, whom he resembled in boldness and accuracy of prompt decision. In 1690, he found himself near Fleurus in front of the prince of Waldeck. By a bold and skilful manœuvre he carried his right wing across a small stream which covered the hostile army. The prince suddenly attacked in his flank, made a backward movement. Luxemburg took advantage of this, came upon him suddenly in the midst of a disorderly march, killed 6,000 of his men, captured 100 flags, his guns, his baggage, and 8,000 prisoners. This was the first French victory of Fleurus, July 1st, 1690. Master of the region,

Luxemburg invested Mons, the capital of Hainault. Louis XIV assisted at the siege.

William III, rid of James II, hastened thither with 80,000 men, but was unable to prevent the capitulation of the city in April, 1691, after nine days of entrenchment. The following year Luxemburg besieged Namur, the strongest place in the Netherlands and at the confluence of the Sambre and the Maas, and took it, again under the eyes of Louis XIV and the army of the enemy (June, 1692). This was one of the great sieges of the seventeenth century. Vauban's rival, Coehoorn, defended the place, a part of whose fortifications he had built. But William, always beaten, never gave in. On August 3rd, 1692, he surprised Luxemburg at Steenkerke (Steinkirk) in Hainault.[c]

Steenkerke and Neerwinden (1692–1693 A.D.)

A spy whom the French general had in William's ranks was discovered; he was forced, before being put to death, to write a false despatch to Marshal de Luxemburg.[d] The latter was thrown off his guard, persuaded by the false despatch that William had a totally different plan than to take the offensive on that day.[e]

The sleeping army was attacked at daybreak, and a brigade was already in flight before the general knew what was happening. Without an excess of diligence and bravery all would have been lost. Luxemburg was lying ill — a fatal circumstance at a moment demanding strong activity: but the danger gave him strength; prodigies were necessary to be kept from being beaten, and he performed them. To change his position, to give a battle-field to the army which had none, to re-form the right wing where all was confusion, to rally the troops three times, to charge three times at the head of the household cavalry, was the work of less than ten hours. Luxemburg had in his army Philip, duke de Chartres, the future duke of Orleans and regent, who was just eighteen years of age. He could not be useful in striking a decisive blow, but it was a great thing to spur the soldiers on that a grandson of France should be charging with the king's household troops, be wounded in the fight, and return again to the charge in spite of his wound.

A grandson and a grand-nephew of the Great Condé were both serving as lieutenant-generals — the one, Louis de Bourbon, commonly addressed as Monsieur le Duc, and the other François Louis, prince of Conti, his rival in courage, spirit, ambition, and reputation. The prince of Conti was the first to restore order, rallying some of the brigades and making others advance. M. le Duc accomplished the same manœuvre without need of emulation. The duke de Vendôme, grandson of Henry IV, was also lieutenant-general in the army, where he had been serving since the age of twelve, and although he was forty he had never been given a leading command. It was necessary for all these princes, with the duke de Choiseul, to put themselves at the head of the household troops, to drive off a body of English who were holding an advantageous position upon the possession of which the success of the battle depended.

The household troops and the English were the finest soldiers in the world and the carnage was great. The French, encouraged by the number of princes and young nobles who fought around their general, finally carried the position. The Champagne regiment routed King William's English guards, and when the English were beaten the rest had to give in. Boufflers, afterwards marshal of France, rushed up at this moment from another part of the battle-field with the dragoons and completed the victory. King William,

having lost about 7,000 men retreated in as fine order as he had attacked; and always beaten, though always to be feared, still kept up the campaign. The victory due to the valour of the young princes and the finest scions of the nobility created an effect at the court, in Paris, and in the provinces which no victory had ever done before.

M. le Duc, the prince of Conti, Vendôme, and their friends found, on returning, the roads lined with people; the acclamations and joy mounted to frenzy; all the women were eager to attract their glance. The men were wearing at that time lace cravats which were arranged at the expense of much time and trouble; but the princes, who had jumped into their clothes for the battle, twisted their cravats carelessly around their necks. Women now wore ornaments in imitation of this; they were called *Stein Kerques*. All novelties of ornament were *à la steinkerque*.[d]

The following year Louis XIV had a fine opportunity to conquer, perhaps, the Netherlands and make peace. William ventured close to Louvain with only 50,000 men. Louis was in the neighbourhood with more than 100,000. The whole army believed that a great blow would be struck; but it was represented to the king that he could not commit his person to the hazards of a battle, and in spite of Luxemburg, who, it is said, threw himself on his knees, he declared the campaign at an end and returned to Versailles. From that day he never appeared with the army. His reputation suffered much from this abroad; biting satires paraphrased Boileau's famous verses:

Louis, les animant du feu de son courage,
Se plaint de sa grandeur qui l'attache au rivage.

Nevertheless it was not personal courage that was wanting. His conduct in camp was perfectly conventional — no particular recklessness, but no timidity. He exposed himself sufficiently. At the siege of Namur, if Dangeau is to be believed, men behind him were wounded. The victories of Namur and Steenkerke had delivered Hainault and the province of Namur into Luxemburg's hands; he penetrated into southern Brabant but found William, strongly entrenched in the village of Neerwinden between Liège and Louvain opposing him, July 29th, 1693. Few days were more murderous; Neerwinden was carried in two assaults by the infantry which, the first time, made a stout bayonet charge, an example which Catinat's regiments followed two months later at Marsaglia. For four hours the French cavalry were under the deluging fire of 80 pieces of cannon; and William, who observed them waver only to close up their ranks as the rows were mowed down, exclaimed in admiration and vexation, "Oh the insolent nation!"

There were about 20,000 dead, of which 12,000 were on the side of the allies. After this success it might have been possible to march upon Brussels and dictate terms of peace, but the French were content to besiege and take Charleroi. It is true that by doing this they held the important line of the Sambre, whence an army might dominate the Netherlands and make most perilous any attempt of the enemy against Flanders or Artois.

Last Years of the War; Treaty with Savoy (1693–1696 A.D.)

The victory of Neerwinden was the last triumph of Luxemburg, "the upholsterer of Notre Dame," as he was called by the prince of Conti on account of the many banners with which he had decorated that cathedral. The following campaign was uneventful, and he died in the month of January, 1695. His successor, the duke de Villeroi, did not accomplish very

much, in spite of an army of 80,000 men; he did not even prevent the prince of Orange from retaking Namur (August, 1695). But in Spain Vendôme entered Barcelona (August, 1695), after a memorable siege and a victory over the army of relief. The year 1695 passed without any military events. The allies destroyed the French stores gathered together at Givet, and the two armies of the Netherlands had enough to do to exist, without thinking of attacking.

On the sea Tourville had avenged in 1693 the disaster of La Hogue, by a victory in the bay of Lagos near Cape St. Vincent. During the following years the great armaments were suspended, because Seignelay was dead; but the corsairs, Jean Bart, Duguay-Trouin, Pointis, Nesmond, destroyed the commerce of the English and the Dutch, who to revenge themselves attempted to land on the French coasts, and trained engines of war against St. Malo, Le Havre, Dieppe, Calais, and Dunkirk — vain and ruinous threats which terminated "in breaking windows with guineas." Dieppe alone suffered from them. In America the count de Frontenac bravely defended Canada, by taking the offensive always, although the province had not above eleven or twelve thousand inhabitants and the English colonies had ten times as many. Hudson's Bay, and nearly the whole of Newfoundland were conquered.



JEAN BART
(1651–1702)

Meanwhile the war languished; everybody was exhausted. An attempted assassination of William, which would have been followed by a French invasion, having failed, Louis proposed peace. Charles II of Spain was near death, this time in real earnest; he was leaving no child, and the question of the Spanish succession began to be raised. It was important to the king that the European coalition should be dissolved before this great event. He showed an unaccustomed moderation; in the first place detaching from the league the duke of Savoy (1696), he gave back to him all his towns, not excepting Pinerolo, and proposed to him the marriage of his daughter with the young duke of Burgundy, son of the Grand Dauphin. In return the duke had to promise the neutrality of Italy, and in case of need to join his forces with those of France.[c]

After the treaty with Savoy Louis XIV made the concessions which had hitherto been most repugnant to his pride. He consented to accept the treaties of Westphalia and Nimeguen as bases of the negotiations, taking into consideration certain reservations with regard to Luxemburg and Strasburg, and to recognise William III as king of England. Henceforth the war had no further object. Commerce between France and Holland was re-established October 1st, 1696. Preliminary *pourparlers* between France and the maritime powers took place at the Hague. Sweden obtained acceptance of the mediation she had proposed several years before and a congress

was agreed upon which was to be held at Ryswick, a country house belonging to William and situated between the Hague and Delft. Caillères, Crécy, and Harlay were designated to represent France.

The king intended to bring pressure to bear on the deliberations of the congress of Ryswick, to render the empire and Spain more tractable and to bring the maritime powers to abandon them or force their hands. He counted the more on this since William III, a mark for the recriminations of his allies, was already replying to them with acrimony and a deserved haughtiness.

France made for the campaign of 1697 the same preparations as in other years. One hundred and fifty thousand men, forming three armies under the orders of Villeroi, Boufflers, and Catinat, entered Belgium, whilst two other armies under Choiseul and Vendôme were carrying on campaigns in Germany and Catalonia. All that was done in the Netherlands reduced itself to the taking of Ath which Catinat and Vauban forced to capitulate on June 7th; a demonstration was made against Brussels but William hurried up and covered the town. In Germany, the opposing armies contented themselves with watching one another. It was otherwise in Catalonia. Louis XIV had long meditated the taking of Barcelona but he could only execute this project on condition of being master of the sea. He took advantage of the circumstance that this year the Anglo-Dutch fleet did not appear in the Mediterranean. The Toulon squadron, commanded by Vice-admiral D'Estrées and the bailli de Noailles, surrounded the harbour. Vendôme, who had 30,000 men, repulsed a relieving army and forced Barcelona to surrender, August 10th, fifty-two days after the trenches had been opened and after two assaults.

Shortly before, a squadron composed of ships belonging to the state but equipped at the expense of private persons and commanded by an experienced sailor, Pointis, had made a successful and brilliant cruise in America. Pointis attacked Cartagena de las Indias, in New Granada, the principal *entrepôt* of the trade of Spain with Peru. He took possession of the town and carried thence bullion to the value of nine millions, besides rich merchandise. He had the address to escape the enemy's fleets which set out in pursuit of him and to return safely to France with his prize.

THE TREATY OF RYSWICK (1697 A.D.)

The congress which had begun at Ryswick May 9th, 1697, proceeded with the usual slowness. On the 10th of September three treaties were signed with Holland, England, and Spain. By the first two France on the one side, Holland and England on the other mutually restored all that they had taken on the continent, on the seas, and in the colonies. The most important of these restitutions were that of Pondicherry, which the English had taken from France in 1693, and that of Orange which was surrendered to William. Liberty of trade was completely re-established. Louis XIV recognised William as king of England. A reciprocal amnesty was granted to the French and English who had borne arms against their own country, but Louis XIV refused to recall the banished Calvinists to France; he maintained that questions of religion were questions of the internal government of each state and he would not allow even a discussion of this point.

By the treaty with Spain France restored her conquests in Catalonia, the town and duchy of Luxemburg, with the county of Chiny, Charleroi, Mons, Ath, Courtrai, with their dependencies, and the dependencies of Namur. She surrendered Dinant to the bishop of Liège. She retained only a small number of towns or villages dependent on Charlemont and Maubeuge.

On the 30th of October a fourth treaty was signed between France and the empire and the emperor. Louis XIV surrendered all that he had occupied in Germany except Strasburg, which was ceded to him in full sovereignty. Kehl, Hüningen, and the forts of the Rhine were to be razed so as to secure the free navigation of the river which had now become a frontier from Hüningen to Landau. It was the same with Trarbach and Mont-Royal on the Moselle. Louis XIV restored Lorraine to Duke Leopold on the terms of the treaty of 1670, that is to say, while retaining Marsal and a right of passage, besides Longwy and Saarlouis. It was agreed that the duke should marry a daughter of Monsieur. Prince Clement of Bavaria remained in possession of the electorate of Cologne ; but Cardinal von Fürstenberg recovered his titles and his confiscated property. The claims of Madame, duchess of Orleans, on the heritage of her father, the former elector palatine, were compounded for in money. The official gazettes and the panegyrics still vaunted the glory acquired by ten years of struggle against Europe in coalition, the brilliance of the captures of cities, and that of victories. But if these are noble subjects of pride or rather of consolation, the majesty with which Louis XIV effected to give peace rather than to submit to it created no more illusion in France than in the rest of Europe. No one could believe in his moderation or his generosity. Those most disposed to admire his policy imagined that he had had a deep laid scheme and a secret design.

In reality Louis XIV had been obliged to go back to the year 1679 or at least to 1681. The necessity for making restitutions had always been admitted but there was no idea that they would have to be so complete. On the whole, if the Peace of Ryswick saved the honour of the country, it was impossible not to see in it the final check and condemnation of the policy pursued since Nimeguen.[b]

LOUIS XIV AND THE POLISH THRONE (1697 A.D.)

While Louis was arranging the Peace of Ryswick, the throne of Poland became vacant. This was the only one in the world which at that time was elective—citizens and even foreigners might aspire to it.

The abbé de Polignac, afterwards cardinal, had the ability to incline the suffrage in favour of that prince of Conti, known for his valourous actions at Steenkerke and at Neerwinden. He balanced with eloquence and promises the money which Augustus, elector of Saxony, lavished for the same purpose.

The prince of Conti was elected king by a majority, June 27th, 1697, and proclaimed by the primate of the realm. Augustus was elected two hours later by a much smaller vote, but he was a sovereign and powerful prince, and had troops ready on the Polish frontier. The prince of Conti was absent, without money, without troops, and without power ; he had nothing in his favour but his name and Polignac. It was necessary that Louis XIV should either prevent Conti from accepting the throne or provide him the means of taking it from his rival. The French ministry took the stand that they had already done too much in sending the prince of Conti, and too little in giving him only a feeble squadron and a few letters of credit with which he arrived in the harbour of Dantzic. The prince was not only not received at Dantzic, but his letters of credit were protested. The intrigues of the pope, those of the emperor, the money and troops of Saxony already assured the crown to his rival. Conti returned with the glory of having been elected. France had the mortification of letting it be seen that she had not enough strength to create a king of Poland.[d]

THE QUESTION OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION (1697-1700 A.D.)

Immediately the Peace of Ryswick was signed, the attention of the powers became fastened on the uncertainties of the Spanish succession. Charles II had, since his infancy, gone entirely against all the unfavourable prophecies inspired by his frail and sickly constitution. He had grown to manhood and even married. Louis XIV had made him, in 1679, wed, as we have seen, a daughter of the duke of Orleans in the hope of fortifying French influence at Madrid and circumventing the designs of Austria; for the emperor was leaving nothing undone to assure to himself the alliance of Spain for the present and the succession for the future. The indefinite treaty of partition, signed in 1669 between the courts of Versailles and Vienna, had been entirely abandoned. Leopold, uneasy at the thought of the influence a French queen might acquire, insisted that one of his own sons, the archduke Charles, be accorded the title of heir presumptive at Madrid as long as Charles II had no children; but France succeeded in preventing this.

Marie Louise of Orleans, queen of Spain, succumbed in 1689, like her mother, to a sudden illness and at the same age. Charles II remarried — this time a German princess, Maria Anna of Neuburg, the empress' sister. The new queen, vain, pretentious, and extremely hostile to France, never ceased to favour the wishes and schemes of Austria at Madrid.

Two things were very necessary to Spain — that the heir to the crown should be designated in advance, and that the already enfeebled monarchy should not be dismembered. Charles II adopted the electoral prince of Bavaria and by will declared him his heir.

It is necessary to enumerate here the claimants and give an idea of their relationship. Philip III had two daughters — Anne of Austria married to Louis XIII, and Maria Anna married to the emperor Ferdinand III. Philip IV had married his two daughters in the same fashion — Maria Theresa to Louis XIV and Margarita Theresa to the emperor Leopold. The Spanish princesses married in France were the elder in their generations, but had renounced the succession. The question was whether these renunciations were valid. Louis XIV claimed that they were not, at least as regards Maria Theresa. In this case the closest heirs to the Spanish crown were the dauphin and his three sons, the dukes of Burgundy, Anjou, and Berri. If, on the contrary, the French branch was outlawed, the succession passed to the German line. Leopold had had a single daughter by his marriage with Margarita Theresa, Maria Antonia-Josepha, the wife of the Bavarian elector; who in turn had one son, still a child, whom Charles II designated his heir.

But Leopold, although maternal grandfather of the young Bavarian prince, raised another claim. On marrying his daughter he had imposed a renunciation upon her, and henceforth he claimed that he himself was the nearest heir through his mother Maria Anna, daughter of Philip III; and his scheme was to transmit his personal rights to the sons of his second marriage with Elizabeth of Neuburg. As the elder of these princes, Joseph, elected king of the Romans in 1690, would succeed him in the empire, Leopold aspired to make the second, the archduke Charles, king of Spain — a combination which, without confounding the empire and Spain, would perpetuate the rule of both branches of the Austrian house in these two countries and recommence the work of Charles V.

Count von Harrach, Leopold's envoy at Madrid, obtained with the queen's aid the annulment of the will in favour of the Bavarian prince. But he

wanted more, and insisted that the archduke Charles be declared heir presumptive. The unfortunate king, worn out with these insistances, and believing at moments that he had a new hold on life, announced that he would await the day when the viaticum should be brought him before again appointing his successor.

Louis XIV sent the marquis d'Harcourt to Madrid in the month of December, 1697, with instructions to keep watch on Charles' court and to obstruct the emperor's plots; but knowing that he would obtain nothing directly from the court of Madrid, he thought the surest and wisest plan was to negotiate the bases of a partition with England and Holland, which would be a means of proving his pacific disposition to Europe and would also bear upon the emperor and the empire. Consequently Pomponne, whom he had recalled to the head of foreign affairs, and Torcy, son of Colbert de Croissy, invested with the office of secretary of state since 1689, in March, 1699, made overtures to Lord Portland (Bentinck), English ambassador at Paris. Tallard was sent to London to come to an agreement with William III directly.

The negotiations, embarrassed by conflicting claims, lasted six months. Finally a first treaty of partition was signed at the Hague on October 11th by Tallard and Briord, ambassadors of France to England and Holland. It was agreed that the dauphin should have Naples, Sicily, the Spanish towns on the coasts of Tuscany, the marquisate of Finale and Guipuzcoa, that the archduke should have the Milanese, and that the electoral prince of Bavaria should reign over Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands. As this last prince was only four years old and might die, it was decided that in that event the elector, his father, should succeed him.

Charles II was not long in hearing that the succession had been regulated without consulting him. He therefore convened an extraordinary council, and to prevent the dismemberment of his state he constituted the prince of Bavaria his sole heir (November, 1698) in spite of the fact that the elector, father of the young prince, had consented to the treaty of partition. This decision, in cutting short the dispute, was of a nature to satisfy neither France nor Austria, and the death of the young prince of Bavaria, which occurred unexpectedly at Brussels, on the 8th of February, 1699, reopened the question. It annulled not only the will of the king of Spain, but also the signed treaty of partition between France and the maritime powers.

Louis XIV immediately undertook negotiations for a second treaty with the powers, only more secretly, in order to be considerate of the last days of Charles II and not to wound the susceptibilities of the Spaniards. Tallard demanded that the Milanese should be added to the dauphin's portion, in consideration of which he offered to let the archduke rule over Spain and the Indies, and to allow England and Holland the choice of a sovereign for the Netherlands. Louis XIV hoped to attain with the help of the maritime power the adherence of the emperor, if necessary, by force, if Leopold made war.

Villars had left for Vienna in June, 1699, with the title of envoy extraordinary and a suite of unusual splendour. But to his vague overtures he received even more vague replies. Leopold had a rather undecided character, and he was convinced that he would obtain from Charles II a will in favour of the archduke Charles. He contested the fundamental principles of the arrangement proposed by France, and finally formally declined the acceptance of any treaty whatever (October, 1699).

Louis XIV then resolved to go further, and a second treaty was signed in London and at the Hague, the 13th and 25th of May, 1700. It was agreed that the dauphin should have all that had been assigned to him in the

partition treaty of 1698, plus the duchy of Lorraine; that the duke of Lorraine should have the duchy of Milan, and that the remainder of the Spanish monarchy, comprising Spain, the Indies, and the Netherlands, should pass to the archduke Charles. Three months were given to the emperor to accept this arrangement; if at the close of that time he had not consented, another prince was to be substituted for the archduke.

Rarely had Louis XIV shown himself as wise, as prudent, and as able, as in forming these last combinations. He restored Lorraine to the crown, with one stroke of the pen and without striking one blow — an important province, and one which had been French for a long time. As for Naples and Sicily, he offered them to Victor Amadeus in exchange for Nice and Savoy, which would procure for France the natural barrier of the Alps and repair the set-back of Ryswick.

In spite of the precautions which ought to have assured its secrecy, the second treaty of partition was known in Madrid as quickly as the first had been, and produced the same effect there. The king was much affected, the queen became so enraged that, according to one story, she broke the furniture of her apartment. The nation, wounded that the treaty should have been concluded without consulting it, burst into recriminations against the maritime powers; the thought only of dismemberment aroused its pride.

The unhappy king then resolved to make a new will, the third. He consulted jurists, theologians, the pope himself — to quiet his conscience, alarmed by the thought of disinheriting the house of Austria. Restrained by his scruples, he again feared that Louis XIV would not accept a will made in favour of a French prince, and would prefer to hold to the treaty of partition. Finally, feeling the approach of death, he signed his third last will and testament, on the second of October. He could not have put it off much longer, for he died on the first of November.

The will was at once made public; Charles II declared the Spanish monarchy to be indivisible. Recognising the rights of Maria Theresa and her children, he designated as his successor the second of the grandsons of Louis XIV, the duke of Anjou; and pending the arrival of the young prince he confided the government to a junta, or council of regency, presided over by the queen his widow. In case of non-acceptance of the duke of Anjou, he substituted for him his brother the duke de Berri, third son of the dauphin, and the duke of Savoy successively.[b]

The only doubt now remaining was whether Louis XIV would accept the will of the late king of Spain in favour of his grandson, or whether he would adhere to the treaty of partition. There was a long debate respecting this in his council, which council consisted of but three ministers, the chancellor Pontchartrain, the duke de Beauvilliers, and Torcy. They were divided in opinion; but the dauphin, "drowned as he habitually was in apathy and fat," says Saint-Simon,[a] gathered warmth and energy on this occasion, and spoke eloquently in behalf of his son's rights. Madame de Maintenon, who had also a voice in this council, adopted the same views; and Louis decided.[f]

ACCESSION OF THE BOURBONS IN SPAIN

The duke of Anjou took the title of Philip V and left on the 4th of December to live among his new subjects. Louis XIV wished that the departure of his grandson should take place amid extraordinary solemnity. It is at this time the celebrated phrase, "There are no more Pyrenees," is

attributed to him.[1] The young prince travelled with the customary pomp and slowness of royal cortèges. On the 21st of April, 1701, he was received at Madrid, by the noisy acclamation of the Spaniards, who flattered themselves with having saved the integrity of their monarchy.

In the whole of Europe the surprise was the same. Holland and England believed that they had been duped, that Louis XIV had had an understanding with Charles II, and that for the last two years he had been playing a continuous comedy. However, they contained themselves and made no manifestations. William contented himself with saying to Tallard, "It is well. I recognise the loyalty of your master." In Austria, where until the last moment there was hope of a will in favour of the archduke, there was both despondency and irritation. The emperor protested against the will of Charles II, against its acceptance by France, and sent his agents in hot haste to the different courts in order to resuscitate the coalition; at the same time making preparations for a war of which he resolutely counted the duration and extent.[b]

France had two great interests. The first was that Spain should be her friend, to assure peace on the southern frontier; the second that the north-eastern frontier should be as far as possible from Paris and that the Netherlands should at least be her ally. The first point seemed gained by the advent to the throne of Charles V, of a Bourbon whom the people received with enthusiasm, and whom the other states recognised. The emperor protested and armed, but alone he could do nothing.

The second end was more difficult to attain, for neither England nor Holland was willing to see the French at the mouth of the Schelde. To get there much tact and prudence was necessary. The king unfortunately unmasked his plans too quickly and braved Europe as if it was his pleasure to do so. In spite of the formal clauses of Charles II's will, Louis did not exact from Philip V a renunciation of the French throne, and by letters patent issued in December, 1700, preserved to him his hereditary rank between the duke of Burgundy and the duke de Berri. This would make possible a union of the two monarchies and show an alarmed world France and Spain one day governed by the same king, which would not have been a good thing for either country, and still less so for Europe. A little later Louis drove the Dutch from the places they occupied in the Netherlands by virtue of the Treaty of Ryswick, and replaced them with French garrisons.[2] Finally on the death of James II he acknowledged the prince of Wales, his son, as king of England, Ireland, and Scotland, in spite of the advice of all his ministers. This insult to the English people and to William III made war inevitable.

THE GRAND ALLIANCE OR THIRD COALITION AGAINST FRANCE (1701 A.D.)

A third coalition was formed in September, 1701. This was the grand league of the Hague into which England, Holland, Austria, and the empire

[1 As to the saying, "There are no more Pyrenees," its history is this. The ambassador to Spain, as reported by Dangeau, spoke these words: "The journey became easy and presently the Pyrenees melted away," which the *Mercure* on the following day rendered as follows: "What joy! There are no more Pyrenees, they are levelled, and we are one." However, the phrase well expresses the situation and the aim of Louis XIV. If it did not fall from his lips, it was in the minds of all.c]

[2 This was done by Marshal de Boufflers in February, 1701, and effected with the help of the elector of Bavaria, governor of these provinces. Holland took fresh alarm at this act.]

entered, and a little later Portugal, which became an enemy of France [1] since a French prince was king of Spain, and especially since French ports had been closed to her products. No allies in the whole of Europe remained to Louis but the elector of Bavaria,[2] to whom the Netherlands were secretly promised, and the dukes of Modena and of Savoy, who were however soon to change sides. Spain was with him, but having no soldiers or money or ships was, as Torcy said, "A body without a soul whom France must nourish and sustain at her own expense."

William III scarcely saw the opening of the war. He died in the month of March, 1702, but his policy survived him because it was a national one. Three men, famous for their hatred of France, Heinsius, Marlborough, and Prince Eugene, replaced in close union the leader of the league. Heinsius was grand pensionary of Holland, and he directed the republic with the authority of a monarch when the stadholdership was abolished on the death of William.



CLAUDE LOUIS HECTOR, DUC DE VILLARS
(1653–1734)

Churchill, duke of Marlborough, received his first taste of war under Turenne. He governed Queen Anne through his wife, parliament through his friends, the ministry through his son-in-law Sunderland, secretary of state for war, and through the great treasurer Godolphin, father-in-law of one of his daughters. Prince Eugene, born in France about 1663, of the count de Soissons and a niece of Mazarin, that Olympe Mancini whom Louis had for one moment favoured, belonged to the house of Savoy. Destined to an ecclesiastical career he preferred the profession of arms, and, at the age of nineteen, demanded a regiment of Louis XIV, who refused to make a colonel of the "Savoyard abbé."[c] Disappointed in his hopes of obtaining a command in the armies of France, he turned to the Empire and became its greatest protector against the ambition of his former sovereign. During one campaign of 1692 he had foiled Catinat in Italy and by a bold raid from Piedmont into France had spread alarm far into the kingdom.[a] After the Peace of Ryswick he resisted the Turks who had invaded Hungary and won at Zenta, in 1697, a signal victory which placed him in the opinion of his contemporaries by the side of Sobieski, the saviour of Vienna. Now appointed presi-

[1 Louis XIV at first won Portugal to his side, and, in return for certain advantages, a treaty was signed with France and Spain on June 18th, 1701. But the provisions were not kept. Dom Pedro entered the coalition in May, 1703.]

[2 The elector Maximilian believed himself ill used by Austria, and deserted the allies he had supported in the League of Augsburg. The second treaty with France was signed March 9th, 1701. The elector of Cologne, in spite of the trouble of 1688, also treated with Louis, and threw open her territory to French troops. So did the bishop of Münster and three other powers of the empire.]

dent of the council of war and planning as a minister the expeditions which he was to carry out as a general, he had a decisive influence on the events which were to follow. By his good understanding with Marlborough he was about to give the European coalition that thing which it had always lacked — union.

To triumph over such adversaries France would have had to have the great men of the preceding generation. But Louis had used them up. However, some of the leaders that France still had, Villars, Catinat, Boufflers, and Vendôme, deserved confidence and freedom. It is true that such as Villeroi, Tallard, Marchin, and La Feuillade had every need of good counsel and guidance, but it was not by holding these generals by the leash that they were prevented from inflicting irreparable disaster upon the French arms.

To Louis XIV's idea the war should be defensive at all points except in Germany, whither the elector of Bavaria summoned the French. Boufflers was sent to the Netherlands to oppose Marlborough, who commanded the Anglo-Batavian army; Catinat to Italy to shut the entrance to the Milanese upon Prince Eugene and the imperials; Villars to Germany to join the elector and march upon Vienna.[1]

WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION: THE FRENCH VICTORIES (1701–1704 A.D.)

For three years (1701–1704) the successes balanced each other. However, Marlborough penetrated, in 1702 into the Netherlands in spite of Boufflers, who with two armies on his hands did not know how to manœuvre between them and abandoned without combat the places on the Maas as far as Namur; at least he saved Antwerp the following year by the victory of Eeckeren over the Dutch. In 1701 Prince Eugene descended into Lombardy in spite of Catinat, who had a superior force, but who, badly obeyed and perhaps betrayed by some Spanish officers, did not prevent him swooping down from the Tyrol. Eugene threatened the whole line of the Adige, and crossed that river without resistance at Castelbaldo on the plain, while Catinat was waiting for him at Rivoli in the mountains. He forced the passage of the Blanc canal in a fight at Carpi, July 9th, when Catinat might again have stopped him; but the marshal, confused by manœuvres as bold as they were able, retired behind the Mincio and further still behind the Oglio which opened the Milanese to the enemy. The court degraded him and gave his army to Villeroi.

This protégé of Madame de Maintenon was a good courtier but a bad general. From the very first he wanted to take the offensive. He recrossed the Oglio hoping to surprise Eugene at Chiari, but the duke of Savoy kept the imperials informed of all his movements, and Villeroi, surprised himself, was beaten in 1701.

However, the enemy could advance no farther, so long as it did not have the stronghold of Mantua. Villeroi let the count de Tessé make a brilliant defence there and took up winter quarters in Cremona. Once while he was sleeping in supposed security he was awakened by sudden firing. He dressed in haste, rushed from his lodging, and fell among an Austrian squadron. It was Eugene, who was making a sudden attack on Cremona. He would have succeeded had it not been for a regiment which since four o'clock in the morning had been assembled for review by the colonel. The enemy,

[1 Duclos calls the War of the Spanish Succession "The only *just* one that Louis ever undertook."]

arrived in the centre of the town, were driven back through the gates; but they took the marshal with them (February, 1702). [Ballads were sung in the streets of Paris to celebrate the double stroke of fortune, — Cremona saved and Villeroi captured.] Vendôme replaced him and for two years carried on a successful warfare against the imperials. At first he forced them to retreat beyond the Mincio, which delivered Mantua, then by a rapid march he went to seize their stores at Luzzara, on the right bank of the Po (1702), so that he might approach the Tyrol. At this moment the concealed treasons of the duke of Savoy changed to open defection, the Bourbons having refused, very stupidly, to cede him the Milanese in exchange for Savoy (1703). It was necessary for Vendôme to turn against him to assure communication with France. He seized the greater part of Piedmont and threatened Turin, but he no longer threatened Austria.

The same success in Germany. Catinat, called to the Rhine, did not re-establish the reputation he compromised in Italy. He had allowed the prince of Baden to cross the river and take Landau, Weissenburg, and Haguenau. A diversion of the elector of Bavaria recalled the imperials to Germany. Catinat, urged to follow them, dare not do so; but one of his lieutenants, Villars, did. He attacked the prince of Baden in the Black Forest near Friedlingen, and won his marshal's baton on the field of battle (October, 1702).[c] The victory was as absurd as that of Charles the Bold at Montchery. The French infantry drove back the German and then broke and fled in a panic. Villars was swept back with his men, and was in utter despair when an officer rode up to say that the cavalry had saved the day. It was not much to be proud of, for the German troops were still in good order as they withdrew, but it gave the court its chance to honour its favourite.[a]

The most decisive blow was struck at sea. Sir George Rooke and the duke of Ormond made amends for an unsuccessful attack upon Cadiz, by forcing the port of Vigo, and capturing and destroying the fleet of the enemy, together with the galleons containing the treasures from South America.

The year 1703 passed in Flanders without any action of importance. Marlborough took Bonn and Luxemburg, and manœuvred with a view to capture Antwerp and Ostend, without success. More important movements were taking place on the Rhine, where Villars commanded. The object of the French king's pushing the war into Germany, contrary to his usual practice, was to succour his ally, the elector of Bavaria, who was so sorely pressed by the imperialists that it was feared he would be obliged to abandon the alliance of France. Villars employed the winter months advantageously in making himself master of Kehl, opposite Strasburg. In the spring he succeeded fully in breaking through the imperialist lines, and joining the elector of Bavaria at Ratisbon; thus transferring the seat of war from the Rhine to the Danube. If we are to credit Villars himself, he conceived the idea of marching by Passau upon Vienna. The elector, of a more sober school of tactics, could not share the French general's ardour. A difference of opinion, and subsequent coolness, sprang up betwixt them. Even the more sage advice of Villars, to pass the Danube and attack the imperialists before they could be joined by an approaching army, was but reluctantly followed. The marshal was obliged to shame his ally by threatening to make the attack alone. It took place near Donauwörth, between Höchstädt and Blenheim (September, 1703), and the French were here victorious on a field which was destined to be so fatal to them in the ensuing year. Unable

to bring the elector into his designs, Villars agreed to a plan to invade the Tyrol, and open a communication through that country with the duke de Vendôme, who commanded in Italy. The scheme was unsuccessful. Vendôme was kept in check, not only by Prince Eugene, but by the duke of Savoy himself, and the Tyrolese drove the elector from their valley. He made loud complaints against Villars, and that able general in disgust threw up his command.*f*

In November, 1703, the imperialists suffered a bloody defeat near Speier, which gave Landau back to France. The victor was Tallard. He wrote to the king, "Sire: Your army has taken more standards and flags than it has lost common soldiers."

THE CAMISARDS

This victory put an end to France's success. Louis XIV sent Villars against the revolting Protestants of the Cévennes, the *camisards*. These unfortunate people had just seen Pope Clement XI renew the preaching of a crusade against them (the bull of May 1st, 1703). Bewildered with terror they accepted the help of England and the duke of Savoy, who were anxious to foster civil war in the heart of France; and as they had been cruelly treated, they revenged themselves in turn with similar cruelties.

Villars had it at heart to save the province and bring back these exasperated men. "They are," he said, "Frenchmen, very brave and very strong — three qualities to be considered." He used force against those who persisted in fighting and was indulgent to those who put faith in his word. He won over one of their leaders, Cavalier, and one campaign was almost sufficient to re-establish peace in these provinces; but 100,000 men had perished in this horrible war.*c*

WAR OF THE SPANISH SUCCESSION — FRENCH REVERSES (1704–1713 A.D.)

The elector of Bavaria, however, remained master of the whole course of the Danube as far as Passau. The small army of 20,000 men brought by Villars, but now commanded by Marshal de Marchin [Marsin], swelled his force, whilst Marshal Tallard, with 40,000 men on the Rhine, was ready to march in the spring of 1704 and join Marchin and the elector. These prospects made the court of Vienna tremble. That government was at the same time pressed by the Hungarian insurgents, so that even the recall of Prince Eugene from Italy with all the troops that could be spared from keeping the duke of Vendôme in check, might not prove sufficient for defending the Austrian capital — to such distress was the emperor reduced in the spring of the year 1704.

It was then that Marlborough conceived the bold and generous design of abandoning Flanders, that beaten field, so known and trodden by commanders, so thickly sown with fortresses and cut with lines of defence as to render decisive actions impracticable, and of marching on the Danube, to the relief of the empire. Concealing his intentions, the duke crossed the Rhine at Bonn, the Main near Frankfort, and marched towards Bavaria.*f* At Mondelsheim near Heilbronn he had a conference with Eugene and together they agreed upon the plan of campaign which was to bring the victory of Blenheim and one of the greatest epochs in English military history. The plan was Marlborough's; he had laid it before William III before his death and it had been rejected by the great Dutchman. Now he staked all upon it and executed it in the face of the opposition of England and

Holland. From this time on, the greatest triumvirate of Marlborough, Eugene and Heinsius direct the fortunes of the allies.[a]

The French had in the meantime mustered another army on the Rhine under Villeroi. Him Prince Eugene undertook to observe, whilst Marlborough, seconded by the prince of Baden, undertook to pass the Danube, penetrate into Bavaria, and either force the elector to abandon the French alliance, or punish him for his hostility to the empire. Marlborough lost no time in manœuvring or counter-marches, but advanced straight against the French and Bavarians, who were entrenched at Schellenberg, before Donauwörth, a town that commands a bridge on the Danube. Marlborough's attack was decisive. The entrenchments were forced, the enemy were defeated and fled, leaving many thousand men and several generals on the field, as well as the passage of the Danube free. The English and imperialists instantly poured over the river, crossed the Lech, and, whilst the elector took refuge in Augsburg, until Marshal de Tallard could reinforce him, Marlborough overran Bavaria to the gates of Munich, ravaging and punishing the country for the hostilities of its chief. This wretched and cruel system of warfare did not bring the elector to terms. It irritated him, however, and drove his temper to seek vengeance in a general engagement.

Unable to subsist south of the Danube in a country which he could not occupy, and which he purposely ravaged, Marlborough withdrew to the north of that river. Hoping to draw the enemy after him, he caused the prince of Baden to lay siege to Ingolstadt. What he sought, took place. The elector of Bavaria, anxious for revenge, and Tallard, who had joined him, sharing his ardour, they passed the Danube, and posted themselves at Höchstädt, on the very spot where Villars and the elector had in the last year been victorious. Prince Eugene at the same time contrived to deceive Villeroi, quitting his position, in front of that general, so as himself to arrive with his army in time to join in the action, whilst Villeroi remained perplexed or engaged in uncertain and tedious pursuit.

The Battle of Blenheim

On the morning of the 13th of August, 1704, the French and Bavarians drew up before their camp. Their armies did not mingle, but remained separate, that of Tallard on the right touching the Danube, that of Marchin and the elector in continuance of the line on the left. Before the front of Tallard was the village of Blenheim, on a rising ground, occupied by his infantry. At some distance in advance of the French and Bavarians ran a rivulet with marshy banks, on the other side of which were drawn up the imperials, the Dutch and English; Marlborough commanding the latter next the Danube, Prince Eugene the former. The elector committed a capital fault in not posting his army near to the rivulet, so as either to dispute its passage or to attack the enemy when they had partially crossed it. But he did not suspect an intention to fight on the part of Marlborough. Eugene began the action by attacking the elector and Marchin, from whom he met with a stubborn resistance. Marlborough in the meantime crossed the rivulet, and formed a strong body of infantry opposite the centre of his antagonists. This centre was composed of cavalry; for Tallard and the elector, remaining separate, had each drawn up his army, according to rule, with its horse upon the wings.

But these wings, united, formed the centre of the combined army. And thus a body of cavalry, destined by its nature to act offensively, was posted

in the principal, the central, the fixed position of the army. Tallard no doubt reckoned that Marlborough would attack Blenheim, and, as Condé would have done, spend a world of lives and heroic efforts to master the position. Tallard knew this would cost hours; and he accordingly rode off to the left to see how the elector was faring, whilst his antagonists were drawing up, after having crossed the rivulet. Marlborough in the meantime did despatch troops to attack Blenheim, with the view of distracting Tallard from the principal movement. This was his advance upon the centre, the weak, divided centre of cavalry. In fact it made no resistance. Marlborough rushed in betwixt the elector and Tallard, cutting the French and Bavarian line in two. This manœuvre decided the victory. The elector with Marchin, taken in flank, gave up the advantage they had gained over Eugene, wavered, retreated, fled; whilst Tallard, hemmed betwixt the English and the Danube, ended by laying down their arms and surrendering. As for the marshal himself, he was taken whilst endeavouring to return from the elector's division of the army to his own. The entire glory of this victory was Marlborough's; and he enhanced it by that modesty and those attentions towards the vanquished which had so redounded to the fame of the Black Prince after Poitiers. From French writers we learn that Marlborough first set the example of treating prisoners not only with clemency but with the politeness due to misfortune; a trait that redeems those ravages in Bavaria which the custom of war had unjustly sanctioned. The battle of Blenheim, in which about 60,000 French and Bavarians against 52,000 of the allies were engaged, cost to the vanquished 12,000 men killed, besides a greater number made prisoners. The quantity of cannon, colours, and other trophies, was immense. But its effects were greater than all. The French armies were obliged to evacuate Germany altogether, abandon Bavaria, and retire behind the Rhine. Marlborough proved to Vienna another Sobieski. His victory re-established the imperial throne; nor was the house of Austria ungrateful. [It created him a prince of the empire, while Queen Anne made him a duke.]

War was in the meantime raging in the Spanish peninsula. The archduke Charles had been enabled by England to land with a respectable force in that country, which he continued to dispute against Philip, the grandson of Louis. Portugal had been won over to the side of England and the archduke, and her aid proved of the greatest importance. It was singular to observe in this campaign the armies of France and Spain commanded by an Englishman, the duke of Berwick, while Ruvigny, created earl of Galway, a native of France and a Huguenot *émigré*, commanded the English forces. Sir George Rooke took Gibraltar in the same year in which the victory of Blenheim was won.

Marlborough had delivered Germany from the French, and driven them beyond the Rhine: he then turned his attention to the north, and aimed at expelling them from those provinces of Spanish Flanders which they had taken possession of in the beginning of the war. During the entire campaign of 1705, the duke manœuvred in vain to attain this object by bringing the French to action. A signal victory could alone enable him to reduce a host of strong towns by a single blow; long watching for this opportunity, it did not offer till the spring of the year 1706. Marshal de Villeroi took the command in Flanders, and with orders to give battle. Louis was weary of the tedious war, so many enemies besetting him; the mere expense of resisting on every side being sufficient to crush the monarchy. He was no longer in a condition to await the effect of Louvois' preparations, or Turenne's manœuvres. Experience, sagacity, skill no longer presided over

either his councils or his armies: Louis cried out for something decisive—for battle; like the gamester, whom prudence has deserted, and who is anxious to stake all in a decisive throw, which may relieve or ruin him. He bade Villeroi, therefore, give battle. Had he even selected Villars for the important task! But Villars was an indifferent courtier, being rude, independent, and proud. The "short-geniused and superb Villeroi" was preferred, and despatched on the difficult errand of giving battle to Marlborough.

The Battle of Ramillies, 1706

The French army, of about 80,000 men, reached the banks of the Mehaigne near Ramillies, about half distance betwixt Namur and Tirlemont, on the 23rd of May, 1706. Despite the king's order and his own ardour to fight, it was Marlborough who marched to the attack. Villeroi was waiting to be joined by Marchin; but, knowing himself to have a force stronger than the English general, he resolved to await the attack, drawing up his army in the position that chance had placed it, at an acute angle with the Mehaigne. The French right wing was near this river, with the village of Ramillies on a rising ground in front of it, precisely as Blenheim had been with respect to the French army in the action called by that name. Villeroi's left was here covered by a little marshy river called the Gheete, which rendered it unassailable indeed, but also rendered it useless unless as supporting his right.

Marlborough did not arrive with his army till it was already past noon; he reconnoitred, drew up in line corresponding to the French, and the cannonade began. The duke in an instant had perceived that the Gheete covering the enemy's left rendered engagement on that side impossible; he therefore drew all his force from that side, and drafting it in the most concealed manner possible behind the troops about to attack Ramillies and the French right, he concentrated his force on this point. This manœuvre took a long time to execute, and yet Villeroi took no step to defeat it. When Marlborough advanced, the French household cavalry charged him with such impetuosity and valour as to break the attacking battalions, and to endanger the duke himself; but the English, rallying in front, and allowing these rash enemies to pass to the rear, where there was force enough to deal with them, pushed on both upon Ramillies and upon the French line behind it. The English, being in much superior numbers on this point, owing to the inactivity of the French right, formed in one unbroken line and charged, numbers breaking in between the intervals of the French, who were drawn up in separate battalions, and taking them in flank. Their rearguard failed to support those in front: the baggage, it was said, impeded them: at all events the battle, though begun late, proved ere sunset a decisive victory on one side and rout on the other. The pursuit lasted the whole night, the fugitives suffering greatly in their passage through the defile of Judoigne, which was blocked with cannon and wagons. Here the day of Blenheim was renewed, the loss of the French in killed and captive not being, however, so great. The consequences were not less important; being the loss to France of all the Spanish Netherlands, including Antwerp, Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, Brussels, Mechlin, and Louvain. The fortresses of Menin and Dendermonde surrendered also. Namur and Mons remained, the only towns unconquered.

The court was struck with consternation on learning of this second defeat, of which the details were for a long time unknown. No courier arrived, so that Louis was obliged to despatch Chamillart himself, his minister, to Flanders. Villeroi was distracted, and had lost all self-possession;

everyone condemned a general whose imprudence had placed the kingdom "within two fingers of its ruin." Still Louis was generous to his unfortunate general, and wrote him to give in his resignation, in order to avoid the harshness of deprival. The duke de Vendôme was recalled from Italy to take the command in Flanders; and the duke of Orleans, the king's nephew, succeeded Vendôme. This last appointment surprised the court, which was aware of the extreme repugnance felt by Louis to employ any of the princes of the blood; but so unfortunate had proved his choice of late that the monarch resolved at last to trust the defence of the kingdom to the zeal of his family.

Orleans found the army in Italy in great disorder, the generals divided and insubordinate; Turin was besieged according to the plans of La Feuillade [the most frivolous and incompetent of the favourites of Louis], contrary to the advice of Vauban; the prince in irritation turned over his powers to Marshal de Marchin. Prince Eugene, who had effected his junction with Victor Amadeus, encountered the French army between the Dora and Stura rivers. Orleans was seriously wounded at the battle of Turin, September 7th, 1706; Marchin was killed and discouragement seized the generals and the troops. The siege of Turin was raised and before the end of the year almost all the places were lost and Dauphiné threatened. Victor Amadeus refused to agree to a special peace and in March, 1707, the prince of Vaudemont, governor of the Milanese for the king of Spain, signed a capitulation at Mantua and sent back to France the troops that still remained there. The imperials were masters of Naples. Spain possessed nothing more in Italy.

Philip V had been threatened with the loss of Spain as of Italy. In the past two years the archduke Charles of Austria under the name of Charles III, with the support of England and Portugal, disputed the crown with the young king. Philip V had lost Catalonia and had just failed in an attempt to retake Barcelona, which had surrendered to Lord Peterborough. The road to Madrid was cut off; the army was obliged to pass through Roussillon and Béarn to resume the campaign. The king shut himself up in the capital whither he was conducted by Marshal Berwick, a natural son of James II; but Philip could not remain in Madrid, threatened by the enemy. He betook himself to Burgos. The English entered the capital and proclaimed Charles III.

But this was too much. The Spaniards could not allow an Austrian king to be imposed upon them by heretics and the Portuguese. The cities arose; a handful of cavalry was sufficient to enable Berwick to regain possession of Madrid, and the king returned on the 4th of October amid the acclamations of the people. Charles III now held only Aragon and Catalonia in Spain. The French garrison, unoccupied since the evacuation of Italy, came to the assistance of the Spaniards.

Louis XIV had made his grandson understand that a great sacrifice would be necessary to obtain the peace he believed would soon be due to their peoples. The Dutch refused their mediation. The campaign of 1707 was signalled in Spain by the victory of Almansa, won on the 15th of April by Marshal Berwick over the Anglo-Portuguese army and by the taking of Lerida which surrendered on November 11th to the duke of Orleans. In Germany Villars drove the enemy from the banks of the Rhine,[1] advanced

[1] Villars' achievements had been noteworthy for some time. In 1706 he raised the blockade of Fort Louis on the Rhine. In 1707 he forced the lines of Stollhofen which, extending from Philippsburg to the Black Forest, were regarded as the rampart of Germany.

into Swabia, and ravaged the Palatinate, levying contributions on the country of which he openly kept a part for himself.

The inexhaustible elasticity and marvellous resources of France had somewhat revived hopes in 1707. An invasion of Provence by Victor Amadeus and Prince Eugene, a check before Toulon and their retreat, precipitated by a rising of the peasants, had irritated the allies. Attempts at negotiation at the Hague undertaken by the king remained without result.[i]

But the emperor made a treaty of neutrality for Italy, and that brought to the Rhine frontier the soldiers in Italy.[a] The allies hoped to reduce the king lower; and certainly the prospects of France were never more gloomy. The finances were in the greatest disorder. Chamillart had the management of both war and finance departments: the exertion, united with ill success, was too much; it was killing him. He wrote a piteous letter to this effect, tendering his resignation to the king: Louis read it, and writing on the margin of the letter, "Well, we will perish together," sent it back to the minister. One active genius, nevertheless, was employed at this time to provide a remedy for the poverty of the government, and a reform in the financial system: this was Vauban, the celebrated engineer. The product of his labours was a plan for abolishing the numerous and intricate branches of taxation, and substituting in its place one uniform tax on property. He proposed to take a tenth of its yearly value, which he called a *dîme royale*. This simple mode would have proved the ruin of the financiers, the farmers of the revenue, and the pensioners, that were paid out of divers intricate receipts ere they reached the treasury. The scheme of Vauban was set aside; and paper money now made its appearance in France for the first time.[f] The use of credit was not understood, however, in France as it was being learned in England. The establishment of the Bank of England, which enabled the small kingdom to use all her resources without undue strain or present exhaustion, had no parallel in France, where finances were managed in secret councils of the king, and the nearest approach to national banking was to anticipate future revenues to the utmost limit. To meet or guarantee these anticipations, more imposts must be levied; more distress and suffering resulted. In England the war furnished people with a safe and new means of investment. In France the absence of a regular institution of credit prevented that use of its resources which was to be the astounding achievement of the Bank of France two centuries and a half later.[a]

Despite his distresses, Louis was not inactive. He fitted out an expedition for the pretender to Scotland, which failed. Funds were wanting to supply the armies. Desmarets, who had succeeded Chamillart, told the monarch that it was impossible to obtain money, except from Samuel Bernard the banker. Louis saw Bernard, asked him to Marly, and showed him the wonders of the place with a condescension that made the courtiers stare. Bernard was so set beside himself by the honour, that he declared he would rather see himself ruined than the empire of so gracious a monarch in want; and the loan was instantly effected.

Villars commanded with his usual activity and success on the Rhine in 1708, whilst the duke of Burgundy, grandson to Louis, aided by Vendôme, commanded against Marlborough in Flanders. The allies had not troops sufficient to garrison the numerous towns which they had taken in Flanders, and which were far more inclined to French rule than to the Dutch and English. Ghent and Bruges were, owing to these causes, surprised. Emboldened by success, the French pushed across the Schelde towards Brussels

with rather uncertain intentions. Hearing that Marlborough was approaching, they retired, and invested Oudenarde, which intercepted the passage on the Schelde betwixt the French towns and Ghent. They hoped to take it ere Marlborough could arrive. But that general making forced marches, the French at his approach decamped from before Oudenarde to retire to Ghent. The duke reached them on their retreat, and a partial action took place, in which the French were routed, and driven, with great loss, back to Ghent. The dukes of Vendôme and Burgundy had a serious difference and quarrel on the field. Whilst the commanders were squabbling, their army was beaten. The prince Eugene then invested Lille, a bulwark not yet reduced. Lille surrendered in October, 1708: with it fell Ghent and Bruges; and, with the exception of one or two towns, the frontier of France lay completely open. [This was the darkest hour for Louis XIV. Even the capital seemed no longer safe.]

The year 1709 commenced by one of the most rigorous winters ever known. The populace began to clamour under present sufferings, and with the prospects of still greater. Seeing the disastrous and disturbed state of the population, the parliament thought proper to assemble in the great chamber, to consider the state of things. It was proposed to appoint deputies to visit the provinces, buy corn, and watch over the public peace. It was a bold attempt under Louis XIV. He reprimanded the parliament, and told them that they had as little to do with corn as with taxation. The magistrates obeyed, and were silent.

In such a state of threatened famine, aggravated by the oppression of war, commerce remained at a stand: money was no longer forthcoming. Bernard, the great banker, became a bankrupt. Even the insufficient revenue could not be collected; and an adulteration of the coin was had recourse to as the only expedient. Louis despatched the president Rouillé to Holland to sue for peace; and soon after the marquis de Torcy, minister, he might be called, of foreign affairs, was sent on the same humiliating errand. The states of Holland, or their agents, here repaid the French king all his past insults and pride. His envoys and his offers were slighted, yet these last were sufficiently ample. Louis consented to abandon his grandson the king of Spain, reserving for him merely Naples. The states refused even Naples. Torcy offered them towns to form a barrier in the Netherlands. In this nothing less than Lille and Tournay would content them. They demanded Strasburg and Landau, tantamount to Alsace, and the demolition of Dunkirk. Louis consented to demolish the port of Dunkirk, as also the fortifications of Strasburg. In short, the demands of the allies went not only to reduce France to what it was at the accession of Louis, but prince Eugene claimed to keep possession of his conquests in Dauphiné. Moreover, the allies insisted not only upon the French king's abandoning his grandson, but upon his aiding to dethrone him. "If I am to continue warring," replied Louis, "I had rather fight my enemies than my children."

The negotiations were thus broken off. The monarch gained much by them. He showed his sincere desire for peace; and now making known, in a printed appeal to his subjects, the terms that he had offered and that had been rejected, the national feeling was roused to indignation. The rich sent their plate to the mint, the king and royal family not excepted; the poor hurried to the armies; and Louis was in a condition to face his inveterate foes. The obduracy of Marlborough, of Prince Eugene, and of the Dutch was certainly impolitic; for Spain might in one campaign have been reduced, the French remaining neutral. France, herself, offered to make every fair

concession; and the commanders, in refusing, might well incur the reproach of being actuated by selfish views, if the state of distress in France had not warranted any hopes or pretensions on their part. A great portion of the court of Versailles itself was for abandoning Philip V, and withdrawing the troops from Spain; a measure which did take place in part, owing, however, to a quarrel betwixt Madame de Maintenon and the princess Orsini.

Meantime the allies had entered the field, well supplied from the copious magazines of Holland. The French army, in a state of starvation and nudity, opposed them. Its commander was the marshal de Villars. He was indignant at the arrogance of the confederates, and the despondency of the court: it was he who roused the drooping spirits of Louis and of his ministers, and who alone preserved a confidence in the French soldiery and in the fate of arms. Villars appears to be one of the truest and finest specimens of the French soldier: he was ardent, bold, and valiant; qualities which he enhanced by an air and habit of boasting. Full of resources, he never lost confidence in himself, firmly believing that neither Marlborough nor any other general could contend with him. At the same time he was blunt and rude; could not brook to be commanded; too independent to be a courtier, all ministers hated him and the butterflies of the court joined them. "I am going to fight your enemies," said he to the monarch, as he was departing for a campaign; "I leave you amongst mine."

The Battle of Malplaquet (1709 A.D.)

The duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene had taken Tournay, and now menaced Mons. Villars advanced by the road from Valenciennes to succour it, and posted himself to the right of the road, in an interval betwixt two woods, near Malplaquet. By advancing, he might have routed Prince Eugene, who was at first inferior in numbers; but Marlborough coming up, the two generals determined to attack Villars, who on his side, anxious to measure himself with them and secure an advantage, had covered his strong position by entrenchments and *abatis*, or trees felled and thrown with their branches towards the enemy. The envoys of the Dutch states dissuaded Marlborough from fighting; and they were right. Mons was in the rear of the allied army, and Villars was in no condition to disturb its siege, without at least quitting his entrenchments. Marlborough, however, accustomed to conquer, somewhat undervalued his enemies, and resolved on the attack.

The battle of Malplaquet was fought on the 11th of September. Each wing of the French was in a wood, covered and entrenched, whilst the centre, occupying the interval, had taken scarcely less care to cover itself. Opposite the French centre, however, was a farm and a little wood, which Prince Eugene occupied, and filled with troops that did not appear. The action began on the wings, Marlborough charging Villars and driving him back after a struggle. To support himself, Villars drew reinforcements from the centre, and was making fresh head against the English, when a ball struck his knee, and incapacitated him from commanding. Prince Eugene, watching his opportunity, seized the moment that Villars had weakened his centre, and, leading his infantry from the farm and wood, rushed on the centre, and broke it, carrying their entrenchments. This was victory. In the meantime, the Dutch attack on the other wing, where Boufflers commanded, was defeated. Despite the valour of the young prince of Orange, he could not establish himself in the wood or within the entrenchment; and he was driven back.

But the success of Boufflers was to no purpose. The French left and centre were broken; and all that its victorious right could accomplish was to cover the retreat, and prevent Malplaquet from being converted into the same rout as Ramillies. The allies lost a prodigious number of men in the attack of the woods and entrenchments. The number of French slain was much less. Villars, in consequence, was as proud as if he had gained the battle. "If God should grant us another such defeat, our enemies would be destroyed," wrote he to Louis. He afterwards boasted that but for his wound he would have won the victory: Voltaire, who was present, remarks that few believed the boast. Mons surrendered immediately. This was the last victory of Marlborough.

In the next campaign, indeed, he showed his decided military superiority to Villars, by breaking through lines that the marshal had declared impregnable, and this without losing a man. But whilst France, with the languor of an exhausted but still valiant combatant, was warding off these blows, which the Dutch, in their anxiety for capturing towns and forming a barrier, prevented from being straightforward and vital, fortune was pleased to prostrate Marlborough, and rescue Louis from ruin by the means of a canting clergyman and an obscure woman, who rose to court favour. Sacheverell and Mrs. Masham effected what all the warriors and statesmen of Versailles despaired to do. Marlborough was overthrown, and with him England's inveteracy and force.

Previous to affairs taking this unexpected turn, the situation of Louis was desperate. Again he sent envoys to sue for peace, and they were treated with the same contempt. Sympathy is here excited for the monarch, struggling bravely not for his conquests but for his crown and country. Louis on this occasion showed a spirit that more entitled him to the name of Great, than all his early triumphs. What were his intentions, in case of the war's continuing, and of Marlborough's invading France? He has himself recorded them in a letter to Villars: "I reckoned," said he, "on going to Péronne or St. Quentin, gathering there every disposable troop, wherewith to make a last effort with you, that we might perish together; for never could I remain a witness of the enemy's approaching my capital." This, indeed, breathes the pride of Louis XIV, but at the same time his magnanimity and heroism. The battle of Villa-Viciosa, gained by the French over the Austrian party in Spain, revived his hopes; the disgrace of Marlborough, and the blunted hostilities of England, restored him to security and confidence.

Whilst the clouds in the political sky were thus clearing up for Louis, a mass of private misfortune, almost unexampled, fell upon him. His pride had been brought low. He was now stricken in his nearest affections: his only son, the dauphin, died of the smallpox, April 14th, 1711. The son of this prince became, in consequence, heir-apparent to the crown. The greatest hopes were entertained of this youth. He had been the pupil of Fénelon. Though naturally most violent and extreme in his passions and temper, a sense of religion had worked a reformation in him, and he became forbearing, pious, just. His reign promised to be a golden one for France. Such was the young duke of Burgundy. His duchess [Marie Adelaide of Savoy] was of a character as rare. With the most buoyant spirits and the aptest wit, she was the delight of her royal grandfather, who could not take a journey without her; and with him she took all kinds of liberties. It was she who remarked, on hearing him speak of the triumphs of Queen Anne's reign, that "queens reigned more prosperously than kings; because under a queen men governed, and women under a king."

This prince and princess were both carried off suddenly by some unknown disease [the former on February 18th, the latter on February 12th, 1712]; possibly by the smallpox, which was then universally prevalent and fatal: but none of the external marks of that malady appeared on them. The title of dauphin fell, within a very short time, upon a third head [the duke of Brittany]; and it too was carried to the grave on March 8th. The second child of the late duke of Burgundy, the duke of Anjou, was then at nurse, and about two years old. The same malady seized it; and it was saved, probably, by its superintendent, who would not permit either bleeding or emetic to be employed — the favourite remedies of the time for every ailment. This infant lived, and soon after became Louis XV.

Popular belief could not assign so many deaths of such important personages to the cause of nature or disease. They were attributed to poison; and the physicians, either through alarm and ignorance, or to excuse their want of skill, corroborated, all save one blunt man, the same opinion. Who could be guilty of such crimes? All eyes turned towards the duke of Orleans, nephew of Louis. His life was profligate, his character reckless, and his pride seemed to be to brave public opinion. The king, with his wonted jealousy, had kept the prince from all high or martial employ, except on one or two occasions. In Italy he had shown courage. In Spain, contemning the dullness of Philip V, who at that time had meditated retiring to the Indies, he had intrigued, it was averred, to take his place. This put him in disgrace at court.

Even his studies gave handle to calumny. Chemistry was what he most delighted in, and in this pursuit he was said to be actuated by an unholy curiosity to read and influence his future destinies. Of a sarcastic spirit, that despised and mocked humanity, the duke perhaps encouraged these opinions of him in order to cater to his own amusement. The cry of suspicion was now serious. The court entertained it. The people clamoured about the Palais Royal, and were only prevented by the police from breaking in and tearing the "poisoner" in pieces. To such accusers the duke scorned to justify himself. He sought, however, an interview with the king, who, worn with sorrow and tormented with suspicion, granted it. Orleans demanded to be sent to the Bastille, confronted with witnesses, and tried. Louis for answer could but shrug his shoulders. The monarch's mind was paralysed with his misfortune. The duke's teacher of chemistry was arrested, and there the matter ended. Posterity seems to have acquitted Orleans of the crime; but his contemporaries, more credulous, were far from resigning themselves to the same opinion. Some indeed accused the house of Austria; and the absurdity of this supposition, upheld by many creditable persons, has the effect of invalidating the other. But none at that time dared to doubt the agency of poison.

Battle of Denain (1712 A.D.)

Conferences for peace had opened at Utrecht in the commencement of 1712. It was no longer Marlborough but the duke of Ormonde, who now commanded in Flanders. He concluded a suspension of hostilities with the French; and Villars, delivered from the English, undertook to strike a blow against the prince Eugene. That commander besieged Landrecies, communicating with his magazines through the entrenched camp of Denain. Villars, pretending to assault the besieging army round Landrecies, made a side march suddenly, broke into the fortified lines, called arrogantly by the

imperials the road to Paris, and advanced upon Denain. His officers cried for fascines to fill up the ditch. "Eugene will not allow you time," cried Villars, "the bodies of the first slain must be our fascines." They advanced, stormed the camp, which was commanded by Lord Albemarle, a Dutch general, and carried it ere the prince could arrive. This gallant action roused the spirits and fortunes of the French, and gave weight to their efforts at Utrecht. By their own writers Denain is almost swelled into comparison with Ramillies; its success is said to have saved the kingdom. The defection of the English, under their tory minister, from the grand alliance was, however, the true and only cause of their safety. Without it Villars could not have won the day of Denain, nor Louis made peace at Utrecht on any terms less than the abandonment of the crown of Spain by the house of Bourbon.

TREATIES OF UTRECHT AND RASTATT (1713-1714 A.D.)

In April, 1713, the plenipotentiaries of France signed the Treaties of Utrecht with England, Holland, and Savoy. The former country was gratified by the demolition of the port of Dunkirk, the cession of Gibraltar and Minorca, together with Newfoundland, Hudson Bay, and the island of St. Christopher's. Spain remained to Philip V on his renouncing forever all right of succession to the crown of France. The English ministry endeavoured to render this unwelcome part of the treaty palatable to the parliament by a number of advantages stipulated in favour of British commerce, which, however, as savouring of free trade, and inimical to the connection with Portugal, failed of being well received. The duke of Savoy, in addition to his paternal dominions already recovered by him, had Sicily thrown into his lot.

The treaty with Holland was but provisional till the following year.[f] The emperor and the empire alone remained outside the general peace. War was resumed in Germany and on the Rhine. Villars seized Speier and Kaiserslautern, and laid siege to Landau. Landau capitulated August 20th, and on September 30th Villars entered Freiburg; the citadel surrendered November 13th. The imperials now began to make pacific overtures; Villars and Prince Eugene were charged with the negotiations. The peace was finally signed at Rastatt March 6th, 1714.[i] The Rhine was here acknowledged the frontier line on the side of Alsace. The elector of Bavaria was restored to his dominions. The emperor, in lieu of Spain, received Naples, Milan, and Sardinia, together with Spanish Flanders, in which, however, the Dutch retained the right of garrisoning the principal towns, forming, as it was called, the barrier against France. Namur, Tournay, Menin, and Ypres were amongst these. Lille and French Flanders remained to Louis. He retained this important conquest, as well as Alsace; advantages which the triumphs of Villars materially tended to gain. The title of the king of Prussia was acknowledged, and a certain accession of territory procured to him. The Protestant succession to the throne of England was also guaranteed by France.

One of the principal difficulties of the treaty was to procure from the kings of France and Spain a valid renunciation of their mutual rights to either crown, so as to obviate the possibility of their being united upon one head. The verbal renunciation, or even the oath of the monarch, was found insufficient, and not without reason, seeing how lightly the declaration of Louis XIV on his marriage had been set aside. The English required the guarantee of a national assembly corresponding to their parliament, that, in

short, of a states-general. Louis was, however, more indignant and hurt at this suggestion than at the most arrogant demands of the allies. He represented the nullity of the states, and his own omnipotence. Still his sovereign word was not sufficient. Different modes were suggested. Saint-Simon advised the calling of an assembly of dukes to affix their signatures. Others proposed the entire peerage: but Louis was as jealous of noble as plebeian, and could not tolerate the aristocracy except in the garb and in the submissive office of a courtier. All the guarantee he could give was the solemn registry of the renunciation in his parliament or assembly of legists; and even to this he took care to invite the peers with less than the ordinary form



EUROPE AFTER THE TREATIES OF UTRECHT AND RASTATT
(1713–1714)

and solemnity.[f] The treaties of Utrecht and Rastatt mark a distinct epoch in European history. The age of the Habsburg supremacy, which had ended in the great Peace of Westphalia, was succeeded by that of Bourbon predominance; and Utrecht and Rastatt mark its fall as decisively as the Peace of 1648 had ended the dreams of Habsburg ambition. For a while the French monarchy still stands erect, and by the splendour of its show it still imposes upon the eye. But its tottering structure is doomed when the first great shock of revolution is felt. From now till 1789 the main interest in the history of France is the trend toward the new era which was to replace the old, worn, battered, and ruined edifice of the absolute monarchy with a reconstructed society.[a]

Louis now began to feel his health seriously decay. The hour of his dissolution could not be distant. The future fate of his family and kingdom occupied his thoughts. Of his legitimate descendants but one feeble infant remained, with the exception of the king of Spain, who by his renunciation was set aside from inheriting the crown of France. The duke of Orleans thus filled the place of heir presumptive, and from his station aspired to the regency. Louis dreaded to trust the infant Louis XV to the keeping of this prince, who bore the worst of characters. Though unconvicted, suspicion still rested upon him of having poisoned his relatives. Louis did him more justice in calling him a *fanfaron de crimes*, a braggard of crimes. But still the objection in the royal breast was not removed. Actuated by these motives, as well as by tenderness for the children born to him of Madame de Montespan, Louis issued a decree, giving to the illegitimate princes the full rights of the legitimate blood, calling them in succession to the throne immediately after the young dauphin. Nothing marks the extreme submissiveness of the parliament more than their registry of this decree. But this obsequiousness was evidently owing to the inutility of disturbing the last moments of the monarch. Louis completed this attempt in favour of his illegitimate children by a testament which gave to the duke du Maine, the eldest of these princes, the command of the household troops and the chief power during the minority.*f*

DEATH OF LOUIS XIV

Since the summer of 1714 Louis XIV, already cruelly shaken in health in 1712, had been gradually failing. His chief physician, Fagon, himself enfeebled by age, did not perceive in time the slow fever which was undermining the king's health and did not take advantage of the resources still offered by that powerful constitution. After the 11th of August, 1715, Louis XIV did not again leave the château of Versailles. The fever increased, sleep vanished. On the 24th one of the king's legs which had been causing him acute pain showed marks of gangrene. The next day Louis received the sacrament with calm and firmness. He manifested some scruples respecting what he had been made to do in regard to the bull *Unigenitus*.[1] He would have liked to see his archbishop, Noailles, once more, and to be reconciled to him; means were found to prevent this. On the 26th he bade farewell in moving terms to the principal personages of his court. He also took leave of the prince and princesses, addressed kindly words to the duke of Orleans as though to banish evil designs from his heart if he should have conceived any, and then sent for the dauphin, a beautiful child of five years of age, sole relic of all his legitimate line in France.

"My child," he said to him, "you will soon be the king of a great realm. Never forget your obligations towards God; remember that you owe him all that you are. Try to preserve peace with your neighbours. I have been too fond of war. Do not imitate me in that, nor in the too great expenditure which I have made. Lighten the burdens of your people as soon as you can and do that which I have had the misfortune not to do myself."

[1 The enemies of the Jansenists obtained a decree from the king, interdicting a work entitled *Réflections Morales sur le Nouveau Testament* by Father Quesnel, which Cardinal de Noailles had already approved of. Clement XI launched the bull *Unigenitus* condemning one hundred and one propositions extracted from the *Réflections Morales*. Eight prelates headed by Noailles protested against the bull. The king's confessor, Le Tellier, urged the king to have Noailles deposed. The affair dragged a long time at Rome. The king was about to bring the affair to his bed of justice when he fell ill.]

Touching, but vain words! The successor of Louis XIV was not reserved for a work of reparation but for a work of dissolution and ruin. On the morning of the 28th the king said to Madame de Maintenon that in leaving her he was consoled by the hope that they would soon meet again. She did not respond to this idea of meeting in eternity and appeared to see in this sign of affection only a token of egoism. Thinking the end was near, she set out that very evening for St. Cyr; the next day Louis, being still fully conscious, asked for her; she returned, but only to leave again finally on the evening of the 30th, thus abandoning on his death-bed the man who had so constantly loved her. Her excuse was in her extreme weariness of the existence which Louis had imposed on her. He had overwhelmed her with his absorbing personality; for more than thirty years she had not had a single day to herself; the necessity of perpetually finding new resources to occupy and interest this active but infertile mind, accustomed to live, so to speak, on the substance of others, had exhausted and crushed her.

Louis was now only conscious at moments. The day of the 31st of August passed in this manner: the gangrene was gaining on him. In the night Louis revived to recite with the clergy the prayers for the dying. He repeated several times in a firm voice: "*Nunc et in hora mortis — Mon Dieu, aidez moi!*" then he entered on a long death-agony. On the 1st of September, at a quarter past eight in the morning, the king drew his last breath. He had lived seventy-seven years, reigned seventy-two, governed fifty-four. It was the longest as well as the greatest reign in the history of France. It was not one man, it was a world that was ended.

Before descending, in the train of feudalism, into that night of the past in which one after another the perishable forms of eternal society are plunged, the monarchy, that symbolic form of national unity, had been manifested in a supreme personification which will remain forever engraved in the memory of peoples. Louis XIV is, and will remain, the king, the royal type, for foreign nations as well as for France. All that monarchy, after having brought under one yoke the divergent elements of the multiplex world of the Middle Ages, succeeded in producing in the fullness of her power, she produced in Louis the Great. Flourishing in her prime with the Great King, she grew old with him. The signs of decay multiplied; the gangrene was manifested in her as in him and, if monarchy did not die the same day as the monarch, the silent work of decomposition was no longer to be arrested in her organs. We are about to watch the dissolution of that vast frame until the day in which the real unity, the sovereign nation, shall for the first time break through the worn-out covering in its own true essence, without figure and without symbol.

France prospered under Louis XIV so long as he continued in the ideas of Richelieu; she suffered, then declined, when she became unfaithful to them. He himself condemned the excess of his wars and expenditure; his expenditure on luxury and art, though doubtless very considerable, has been much exaggerated by tradition; as to his wars, they were, some justifiable, others excusable in their principle, but not in the inhuman character which he allowed to be imprinted on them, nor, at times, in the fashion in which they were conducted politically. France desired her natural completion, and, in the respective condition of the nations, the action of France to achieve her retransformation into the larger territory of Gaul was enough to overthrow the equilibrium of Europe and to provoke coalitions. Louis XIV committed the error of claiming to be able to do still more, and, above all, of making the claim believed. The two gravest charges which he merited are not those on

which he condemned himself; they were: in economics, that of having wrought harm and rejected the remedy, ruined the finances and refused the radical reform which might have restored them; in religion, that of having destroyed the great work of Henry IV which Richelieu had continued. But the responsibility of the revocation may well be divided: the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was the logical consequence of monarchy according to Bossuet, and this great crime against the state condemns the monarchy still more than the monarch. The more we blame the monarchical theory as contrary to the true ends of man and of the citizen, the more we are disposed to indulgence towards the prince who was carried away by this theory as by an almost irresistible fatality.

When the New Era, which opened amid the tempests [of the eighteenth century], shall have found its shape and position; when society, free and democratic, shall be definitely founded and recognised; when parties cease to seek weapons in history, the name of Louis XIV will no longer excite the anger of the French people, as the expression of a hostile principle; and his statue, alternately adored and broken, will finally repose amid the great images of the national Pantheon. If the French people do not forget the culpable and fatal errors of Louis, they will also remember that Louis has deserved to be identified with the most brilliant century yet seen in modern civilisation. France pardons willingly, too willingly perhaps, all those who have loved her, even with a selfish and tyrannical love—all those who have made her glorious, even at the expense of her happiness; she is only implacable towards the memory of those leaders who have degraded her.[e]



LOUIS XIV AT THE DEATH-BED OF JAMES II



CHAPTER XXII

THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV:[1] ASPECTS OF ITS CIVILISATION

[1610–1715 A.D.]

> Augustus, Leo X, Louis XIV appear to us in the illumination of art and poetry. Alexander, Cæsar, and Napoleon are greater, but have they such a divine cortège? — ARSÈNE HOUSSAYE.

THAT development of French civilisation and letters which attained its apogee in the second half of the seventeenth century, the progress of science and the taste for art, was not the work of Louis XIV. The movement was begun; Louis XIV had only to support it and give it a particular direction.

In order to seek and determine the causes, it is necessary to go further back. They will be found in the language, which became polished through the aspiration of society, which was reformed after the religious wars, in a better education which had reacted on manners, in a more general education and one more appropriate to the time — in fact, in the development of all the moral energies of France since Henry IV and Richelieu. Those great and independent geniuses, Richelieu, Corneille, and Descartes, gave the impulse, aroused writers or thinkers, and inspired the best society with that love, that admiration of the beautiful, which elevates the soul of a nation.

The cares of war and of power were far from engrossing all the attention of Richelieu. He completed the construction of the Palais Cardinal, which was one of the most sumptuous dwellings ever seen, and which during his lifetime he bequeathed to the king, with the sole proviso that only a prince should ever inhabit it. He likewise embellished his house at Ruel, and his château at Richelieu in Touraine. He patronised Simon Vouet, recalled Poussin from Rome, bought paintings of Lesueur and Philippe de Champagne. He established the royal printing house, and tried, although with little success, to re-establish the royal manufactures established under the preceding reign and almost abandoned since then.

FOUNDATION OF THE FRENCH ACADEMY

In 1635 Richelieu conceived the idea of founding an association whose mission should be the perfecting of the language, and which should be the

[1] By this term is meant the period covering the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV (1610–1715 A.D.).

highest authority in the criticism of literary works submitted by their authors. Boisrobert, Conrart, Chapelain, Rotrou, and the great Corneille are counted among the founders of this association, which was the Académie Française. The men of letters, until then placed only too often in the "domesticity" of the great — a name then far removed from the sense given to it to-day — by means of this association acquired more independence and influence. Formerly they had flattered the powerful; now they began to develop a power of their own and to be flattered in their turn. The parliament made some difficulty about the incorporation of the academy, because it had an invincible distrust of the cardinal's ideas, whose works seemed to it always despotic, and because it feared the new company might be invested with too great privileges and with jurisdiction. It was far from imagining that the academy was to become one of the glories of France, in a time when Corneille led the list of great French writers, when Descartes wrote the *Méthode*, when French society was the most polished in Europe, when Europe already borrowed the language of France, and took France for a model in everything.[b]

THE PATRONAGE SYSTEM

In the first thirty years of the seventeenth century royalty did not yet seek to exercise any influence in intellectual matters. Richelieu is the first to have had the idea of offering royal patronage to the "Nurselings of the Muses." He distributed a few pensions.[c]

Of all styles of literature the drama was most encouraged by Richelieu. Until then it had hardly been more than a popular amusement; it now became that of the most refined and most polished society. Doubtless, the talent of Rotrou and the genius of Corneille bore the principal part in this, but Richelieu aided them. His wish was to replace the ballets and other ordinary diversions of the court by amusements of a nobler sort, by tragedies and comedies of intrigue. He had a theatre in the Palais Cardinal and another in his mansion at Ruel. He often had plays represented there whose plan had been submitted to him. He gave advice to authors, worked with them, and even wrote himself.

His patronage extended also to tuition and studies. An important transformation was taking place in the schools. The reform of the university under Henry IV had had the effect of substituting the study of the great authors for that of scholasticism. Since then the teaching of theology had been renewed; it is well known what brilliancy it gave to the seventeenth century. The teaching of literature was not long delayed, and it is not to be doubted that a more healthful direction of men's minds had largely contributed to prepare the intellectual superiority of this century over those preceding it. Richelieu built the Sorbonne. He favoured competition between the university and the Jesuits and showed his usual superiority in discussing questions of education.

He thought moreover that liberal education was not for everybody, and that the greatest number of families ought to prepare their children for trade or for war. Therefore he founded at his own expense an academy, — a military college for the education of the young nobility.

However, until the end of the Fronde, the court, filled with soldiers, or given up to ambitious rivalries of the noble, full of intrigues with Marie de' Medici, of sadness with Louis XIII, of suspicions with Richelieu, of agitations under Anne of Austria, could not assume to be the supreme regulator of taste, the theatre of the arts, and impose rules or regulations upon genius.

After the Fronde it was different. The refined elegance and magnificence of Mazarin, the brilliant festivities of the first years of the personal reign of Louis XIV, the transformation of the great into courtiers, the spirit of subordination substituted for a spirit of independence, increased the importance of the court. Gradually one became accustomed to look to it alone. It surrounded royalty like a luminous circle, and its brilliancy made all else pale. It became even a means of government. It contributed by its preponderance to annul parliaments and other national bodies.

Louis XIV, who instinctively sought everywhere for aids to his grandeur, understood how to nourish the brilliant society which surrounded the persons and the works of the great writers and artists. He offered the latter a magnificent theatre and unparalleled publicity. He united the scattered forces into a mighty group, displaying their talents in a strong light, making of them a majestic whole. He had all the qualities necessary for this — disposition, taste, the feeling for the beautiful, and particularly the sense of rule and harmony. He established a sort of concert of the great writers, in the same manner as he put the great ministers in harmony with each other.

From this time, with the striking uniformity, regularity, and discipline which was the character of letters and arts under his reign, the men of genius had full sway, nothing held them back. But their place was determined in the great ensemble, and they felt they were obeying a law. A great and noble harmony was established among literary efforts of the most diverse character, as among the arts destined to compete in the grandeur of the same edifice.

Less spontaneous, less audacious, perhaps even less original than in the time of the preceding generation, literature attained a perfection under Louis XIV which it never had to such a degree in any other epoch. It attained this perfection because it addressed itself less to the king and sovereign than to the flower of society grouped around him. The highest society had never before formed such a public. Bred in a grand school of admiration and surrounded by masterpieces, it evinced the greatest interest in matters of intellect. Conversation was an art and a talent, the literary taste an affectation of fashion, in fact a point of honour. The women took part in the movement, and to such a degree that it is to one of them that we owe most of our appreciation of it. Madame de Sévigné[a] in her correspondence, so well named written conversation, immortalised the society of the great century in painting it from life.[b]

Colbert took up the idea of pensions with more liberality and amplitude than did Richelieu. He created the *feuille des pensions*, which was a sort of pendant to the *feuille des bénéfices*. It was started in 1663 partly on the suggestion of Chapelain. Among those on the list was Chapelain, who called himself "the greatest French poet that has ever lived, and the one with the soundest judgment," but whom Boileau simply characterises as "the wealthiest of all the *beaux esprits*"; also some of the great names of literature — Molière, the two Corneilles, Racine, Fléchier, Mézeray, Quinault, Charles Perrault, later Boileau himself, besides many mediocrities. Along with Frenchmen were foreigners — Graziani, the littérateur; the jurisconsult Conring; Ferrari, professor of oratory at the University of Padua; the erudites Böklerus, Gevartius, Heinsius, and Vossius; mathematicians and astronomers, such as Cassini of Bologna, Viviani of Florence, Huygens of the Hague and Helvelius of Dantzic. Louis XIV did more than pension some of the artists. He ennobled Lully, Le Nôtre, Mansart, and Lebrun. To the savants Colbert gave not only money but means of

working; for them he created new chairs in the Jardin du Roi, built the Observatory of Paris, and subsidised missions and scientific expeditions. He was the founder of the *Journal des Savants* which exists to-day.[1]

The Renaissance was above all things a period of freedom. The age of Louis XIV is characterised by order and monarchical discipline. The historians soon perceived that the king was a more exacting protector than the lords of olden times. The latter, provided their families were eulogised, left their clients perfect liberty in other matters, but the history of Louis XIV's ancestors was the history of the whole country, and as his glory reached out in all directions, the historian was no longer free in anything. Colbert let Mézeray know that if he wished to keep his pension of 4,000 livres he would have to speak with more discretion of the *gabelle* and the *taille* and to abstain from too free reflections on the policies of former kings. Mézeray only half understood, and half his pension was suppressed.

Assuredly the royal protection had its good effect, but there was caprice in the king's favours. For a sovereign to control letters and art without making mistakes, he would have to be infallible and with a mind to embrace and understand everything. But Louis XIV did not understand everything and was often mistaken. When, in 1667, he forbade the funeral eulogy of Descartes did he know that the latter was the most eminent thinker of the age?

LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS

In the literary history of the seventeenth century a division must be noted. Voltaire *i* has neglected it when he introduces into what he calls the *Siècle de Louis XIV* such dissimilar geniuses as Corneille and Racine, Bossuet and Fénelon. But even while retaining this time-honoured expression, it should be applied only to that period during which Louis XIV's personality, the prestige of his glory and the action of his laws and institutions were predominant. Now during an entirely earlier period of more than sixty years a whole group of writers was absolutely outside his influence. Régnier, Rotrou, Corneille, Descartes, and Pascal, to speak only of the greatest ones, had accomplished their labours before the personal government of Louis XIV began. On the contrary Racine, Bossuet, La Fontaine, and Boileau, and for the greater part of his work Molière, belong to the generation which saw the splendour of Louis XIV, and which disappeared from the scene before the decadence of the monarchy had commenced. Finally La Bruyère, Fénelon, Vauban, and Bois-Guilbert, without mentioning the great Protestant writers of France, are the products of an entirely different period. In reality the true "century" of Louis XIV did not last more than a quarter of that time, from 1661 to 1685.

The seventeenth century may thus be divided into three periods which present certain common characteristics, and are also distinguished by special characteristics. All three are equally a continuation of the sixteenth-century Renaissance. The charm of antiquity revealed by the humanists is still felt. The gods of the *littérateur* are those of Greece, or rather Greek gods under Roman names. If the French literature of the seventeenth century had perished in some great cataclysm, and if after a score of centuries some erudite Australian or American had found some of its fragments, he might have believed that the contemporaries of Louis XIV worshipped the same gods as the Athenians and the Romans. However, the French, so smitten

[1 Colbert's foundation of learned academies is described in chapter XIX.]

with antiquity, knew little about it. They were, after all, so original, so French, and so steeped in their own age that they showed a singular inability to imagine what was really the civilisation of Athens and of Rome. Louis XIV's contemporaries studied Demosthenes, Plato, and Plutarch to no purpose; they got from them nothing but a deification of the monarchy. They read the ancient authors with keen pleasure, but it did not occur to them to do so in the light of the conditions of ancient life, and they applied to them the same rules of criticism as to the authors of their own day. Since journeys to the East were at that time most infrequent, and no archæological research had yet been undertaken, the age had no idea as to what were the architecture, the furnishings, the costumes, and the manners of antiquity. The French dramatic poets give the title of "prince" to Agamemnon or Theseus, and addressed Phædra or Andromache as "madame," as though these personages had been their contemporaries.

In spite of the cult, well or ill understood, of pagan antiquity, no century was so profoundly Christian as the seventeenth. The absence of the marvellous, from a Christian point of view, in literary works is explained not by indifference for Christianity, but by respect and scruple. Corneille wrote *Polyeucte* and other sacred pieces; but let his *Cid* be compared with those of the Spaniards; all the supernatural is banished to such a degree that the type of the Castilian champion is transformed and almost mutilated. Santiago no longer appears on the battle-field to revive the hero's courage. One of the rules of taste in the seventeenth century is precisely to avoid a mixture of the sacred and the profane.

Seventeenth-century literature chose its subjects from antiquity, from contemporaneous society, from human psychology, but almost never from nature. The world of letters no longer lived in the field as in the sixteenth century; it lived in the cities, especially in Paris, or at the court. Malherbe boasts of going to learn the real French language on the place Maubert; Régnier, Chapelle, Bachaumont, and many others were habitués of the Parisian *cabarets*, and in the narrow streets of the capital formed, as we say nowadays, a literary Bohemia. Racan and some others claimed to have composed *idylles champêtres*, but what is their background? It is no more the French countryside than their shepherds and shepherdesses are French peasants.

A strophe of Malherbe on the banks of the Orne, a few laboured alexandrines of Boileau upon his country house and its trees; one fine page of Honoré d' Urfé upon a valley of Forez — this is almost all that Louis XIV's contemporaries have to say about nature. They looked too much into their ancient authors and too much at themselves to see it well. It is for the same reasons that Le Nôtre was able to create that strange and unreal nature in the gardens of Versailles, and that in painting the genre of pure landscape is almost unknown in the seventeenth century.

As for the special characteristics in the first period — an Italian and Spanish influence is perceptible. Corneille takes from Spanish history the story of the *Cid*, and Molière that of *Don Juan*. After Louis XIV assumed the government, the French borrowed almost nothing from their neighbours. French taste is formed; it is original; it is exquisite.

The first period is a period of freedom; it continues the sixteenth century. Literature has not yet felt the yoke of literary rules. All forms are attempted — tragedy, comedy, and burlesque, and the three are even combined without scruple.

The theatre, the Christian pulpit itself, have singular license. Descartes creates a philosophy and Pascal polemics. On the contrary the first twenty

years of Louis XIV's government are signalled at once by the domination of rules and by the apotheosis of the king. Parnassus has a legislator, Boileau, and a sort of Congregation of the Index, the French Academy.[c]

SCIENCE

The seventeenth century was one of the great scientific ages of humanity. It saw the birth of analytical geometry and of the infinitesimal calculus, the formulation of the astronomical laws of Kepler and Newton, and the workings of astronomical discovery. It witnessed the first great stride of physics, the progress of optics and acoustics, the invention of the barometer, the thermometer, the manometer, the air-pump, the electrical machine ; the first rudiments of the steam-engine ; the first researches on plant life, and the first attempt at botanical classification. Anatomy and physiology were revolutionised by the discovery of the circulation of the blood, of the chyliferous and lymphatic systems, by the beginning of histology and microscopic research. Medicine made progress in all its branches and was enriched by new medicaments.

But much of this was accomplished outside of France. In mathematics the French may place the names of Descartes, Pascal, and Fermat alongside of Kepler, Galileo, Newton, and Leibnitz ; but the great Keplerian and Newtonian laws of universal gravitation ; the great Leibnitzian theories on the formation of our globe ; the astronomic discoveries of Galileo, Huygens, and Helvelius surpassed the work of Gassendi, Picard, Cassini, Bouillaud, and Cassegrain. In physics, Pascal, Descartes, Mariotte, and Denis Papin upheld the French name, but they have but one zoölogist[1] (Claude Perrault also a physician and architect) to place alongside with those of Italy, England, and especially Holland ; in botany Tournefort let himself be outdistanced by the English ; in geology the French had but Descartes and Maillet ; in the medical sciences they had only Pacquet, Duverney, and a few skilful practitioners. This comparative inferiority of French science to art and letters proves that it needs an organisation for work, and a liberality on the part of the public powers which at that time it did not have. The yoke of authority, so harmful to free research, was heavier in France than in the Protestant countries, where scientific progress especially manifested itself. The French superiority in mathematics is due perhaps to the fact that mathematics never had and cannot have an Aristotle. Finally we must take into account the bent of the French mind in that period when the people were above all artists, orators, and moralists. "The physical sciences," said Dacier at a later date, "were little cultivated in an age which seems to find no charm but in literature." We might correct wherein this judgment goes perhaps too far by this appreciation of Cuvier: he says that Francis I was the first to make erudition flourish in France, Richelieu literature, and Louis XIV science.

René Descartes, descendant of a noble family, was born in La Haye, Touraine, in 1596. In 1612 he terminated his studies with the Jesuits at La

[1] An ancedote will show how much the science of zoölogy was still in its infancy. In 1613 some fossil bones, probably those of a mammoth or some other prehistoric quadruped, were exhumed near the Château of Langon in Dauphiné. A surgeon, Habicot by name, recognised them as the bones of the giant Teutobochus, king of the Teutons, and published a ridiculous poem entitled *Gigantéostologie*. A physician named Riolan suspected that they might be the bones of an elephant, but as that animal was then unknown in France he searched for a description of it in the Greek authors ; then he abandoned this trail, which was the right one, and came to believe that these bones were simply stones to which a caprice of nature had given extraordinary forms. At that time the custom was to explain thus what could not be understood.

Flèche. The period between 1612 and 1629 was spent in travel, which was followed by his stay in Holland. Just one year after the appearance of the masterpiece of Corneille, *The Cid*, Descartes gave to the world, in 1637, the *Discourse on Method*. This and his *Metaphysical Meditations* (1641) are his two chief works. In 1644 appeared his third great work, *Principles of Philosophy*, in which is propounded his theory of the world and the doctrine of Vortices. Descartes never married. In 1647 the French court granted him a pension; and shortly after he went to the Swedish court, where he had been visited by Queen Christina.[a]

France held it an honour to have given birth to René Descartes. While still very young he solves certain famous mathematical problems; writes, under the name of D'Abrégé, a treatise on music; and shuts himself up for twenty years in a sort of retreat in Holland, where he devotes himself with admirable assiduity to the research of truth, and composes those works which are to have such an influence on the future progress, not alone of science, but of civilisation. In 1629 he promulgates the law of refraction, aspires to make clear the cause of celestial movements, already demonstrated by Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, by reducing them all to a mechanical system. He conceives the idea of whirling clouds of rarefied matter, in the centre of which he places the sun and planets, supposing that the movement of the planets carries around with them the satellites, and that planets and satellites are in turn swept in a circular orbit round the sun. His theories seize upon the popular imagination, and arouse keen enthusiasm; by what he calls his system of "methodical doubting" he points out to humanity the true road that leads to the intuitive perception of nature's laws, and succeeds in so impressing his lessons upon all minds that the absolute empire given by the Arabs and their imitators to the theories of Aristotle — an empire that would have been disavowed by that immortal man himself — is completely destroyed. One of his aims is also to obtain command over the human heart, that he may thereby fortify the basis of morality all over the world, and to this end he gives forth his meditations on the existence of God and the immortality of the soul.[q]



René Descartes
(1596–1650)

Meanwhile the theories of Descartes were invading France and all Europe. In 1650, when occurred the death at Stockholm, at the age of fifty-four, of the man who had given back to the modern world Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, victory was assured, the science of philosophy was founded. There are gaps and imperfections in the system which may expose it to temporary eclipse, but as a whole it will never perish.[q]

Of the fifty-four years which Descartes thus passed on earth, more than thirty were spent in a state of self-abnegation such as no anchorite has ever emulated. It was little that his sleep and diet and exercise were exactly regulated by the single purpose of securing, to the utmost possible extent,

the independence of his soul on his body. His mental appetites were subjugated to a still more rigid discipline. To secure to his reason an undisputed supremacy over all his other faculties, he laboured, not only to cast down every idol of the cavern, but to consign to oblivion all the interests, the sentiments, and the events with which either his heart or his imagination had ever been occupied. He even attempted to emancipate himself from the memory of those deceptive languages, Greek and Latin, in which such subtle disguises have been found for so many mental illusions. That he might ascend to the sanctuary of truth, he thus aspired to become a pure abstraction of defæcated intellect.

"*Cogito, ergo sum*" is the massive foundation stone of the colossal edifice erected by Descartes. That famous proposition, though really "the well-ripened fruit of long delay," may perhaps sound not only as a truism, but as of all truisms the most meagre. Such a judgment would, however, prove nothing except the ignorance and incompetency of the judge.

"I think, therefore I exist," is not the fragment of a syllogism which might be reconstructed thus: "Whatever thinks, exists. But I think. Therefore I exist." It is rather an enthymeme — that is, an immediate sequence of two propositions, of which the second is the necessary offspring of the first. "I think" — that is, I am conscious of the act of thinking. Myself and my thoughts are a plurality, not a unity. They are the objects of which I am the subject. My consciousness of them is my adjudication that such objects exist. Or suppose that I can doubt even the existence of my own thoughts. Well, even so; that very doubt is itself a thought of which I am conscious. Let my scepticism be so absolute, and so universal, as to involve in uncertainty every other conceivable position, yet that very scepticism is the affirmation of myself as a thinking being.

Here, then, the naked reason has at length set her foot upon one resting-place, narrow, if you will, but yet firm and immovable. Here is one truth which cannot be assailed, even by doubt itself; or, rather, here is a truth which doubt itself does but verify and confirm. Nor is this a barren position. It is rather a ground which, when duly cultivated, is prolific of results of the highest moment to every thinking being.

Francis Bacon was not more the founder of rationalism in England, than René Descartes was the founder of it in France. Nor was he content to vindicate the rights of reason. He laboured, also, to determine and enforce her obligations. In Descartes the characteristic logic of the French understanding attained its perfection, as, in his writings, it found its model.

Blaise Pascal was a Cartesian. Like Descartes he began with doubt, in order that he might end in certainty. Like him he renounced all allegiance to merely human authorities, however exalted, and however venerable. In the spirit of his master, he received what was passing in the microcosm of his own mind, as being, at least to himself, the primary and indispensable witness of truth. As a true disciple of that severe school, he not only revered his own reason as the supreme earthly judge of every question so brought under his cognisance, but conducted all such investigations by the aid of the same geometrical logic by which Descartes himself had been guided.

But here the similitude ended, and the divergence began. Descartes impersonated the "Pure reason," sojourning among men, to occupy herself, not with the business of their lives, but with the mysteries of their nature. Pascal impersonated human sympathy, yearning over the world from which he had withdrawn, and still responding to all the sorrows by which it was agitated. Lofty as was the range of his thoughts, they were never averted

from that great human family to which he belonged. Every afflicted member of it had in him a fellow-sufferer.[s]

Pascal was born at Clermont-Ferrand (1623), and died at Paris (1662). He was, like Descartes, a universal scientist. His health, naturally feeble, was still more injured by his intense thought. He was deeply religious, and saw Christianity in Jansenism. A carriage accident, which occurred on the Neuilly bridge, and which endangered his life, caused him to become rigorously devout. He even became subject to visions and hallucinations, and finally withdrew to Port-Royal, where he lived in retirement. He devoted the last years of his life to collecting material for a great work, destined to prove the truth of the Christian religion. The fragments of this great work, notes, pieces of paper, strung together without order or system, were found after his death. His friends at Port-Royal made selections from these, and published them in 1670, — the first edition, very incomplete, of his *Thoughts* (*Pensées*). This book of thoughts is above all a history of a great soul, tormented by doubt, terrified, at the same time attracted, by the mysteries of the faith.[c] *The Provincial Letters* (1656), considered by many his masterpiece, was a biting satire on the Jesuits. The greatest French critics, including Voltaire and D'Alembert, agree in the statement that this work contributed more than any other composition to form and polish the French language. His ascetic life tended to shorten his life. He died in Paris, aged 39.[a] After his death, appeared also two other little tracts, one of which is *Equilibrium of Fluids*, the other *The Weight of the Mass of Air*. To err on the side of rigour, is not the usual fault of genius: but Pascal was in all respects singular, and differed, not only from ordinary men, but from other men of genius. With every deduction that can be made for a few errors arising out of his education, Pascal was undoubtedly one of the ornaments of human nature; and if a few have rivalled him in talents, no man of equal eminence, perhaps, can be found who lived so innocently as Pascal.[r]



BLAISE PASCAL
(1623-1662)

POETRY: BOILEAU

The writings of Descartes and Pascal, the doctrines of the French Academy and of Port-Royal, had perfected the art of prose writing. This had not been done for poetry nor yet for the art of writing in verse, which constitutes the perfection of poetry. On this head much still remained to be done, after the time of Malherbe, to consolidate his work. This was the task of Boileau. To the glory of Port-Royal must be added that of having enlightened, both by precept and example in the art of writing in prose, the poet who best understood and perhaps best practised the art of writing in verse.

For two centuries Boileau has been a bugbear, whom all poets fear. All of them, in fact, find him on their road, threatening with innumerable

difficulties, with fatigue and labour, who so would aspire to the glory of verse. The dramatic poet, the lyrist, the elegist, the writer of comedies, and even the writer of sonnets, must take him into consideration. They are all tormented by the ideal of style which Boileau has set up, and by that other ideal of perfection of language — indispensable to all styles, and without which nothing lasting can be written.[d]

The taste of the great and the noble — in one word, the particular taste of Louis XIV — dominated everything. Gallic and burlesque literature disappeared. The admiration of Louis was universal, profound, and of such sincerity that it excluded, in the grossest flatteries, all reproach of flattery; love of the king was confused with love of the country, and one would not have been believed more of an adulator in glorifying the king than he would be to-day in glorifying France. The great care of writers was studied elegance and perfection of form. Never was literature so completely and exclusively literary and, with the exception of a few works, especially those of Molière, one might say that it was void of new ideas. The ideas which antiquity or Christian tradition furnished, the great general ideas which belong to all ages and all countries, the commonplaces of morality and human psychology were sufficient. It was on this foundation that Racine pushed the analysis of passion to perfection, that La Bruyère[j] struck off, as clean-cut and brilliant as medals from the mint, his *Caractères*, and La Rochefoucauld[k] his *Maximes*.[e]

ORATORY: BOSSUET

The moral and social side of this great literature showed itself above all in works of another kind. La Rochefoucauld wrote the thoughts of a courtier, Nicole those of a director of consciences. The Christian pulpit rose with Bossuet to an unparalleled greatness to keep with Bourdaloue in that middle course, calm and regular, where wisdom tempers strength, and dignity never lowers itself. Bourdaloue was the ordinary preacher of the king and the court, and made for his audience as his audience was made for him. In the pulpit he had the nobility and perfection of Racine. As to Bossuet, he is above all comparison. If he does not for one instant lose sight of rule and law, without which strength cannot be sure of itself, he obeyed less the spirit of his time than he dominated it. While leading the funeral cortège of all the grandeurs of the age, he surrounded it with an incomparable lustre, which still retains the illusion, by the majesty of his eloquence.

Bossuet has not treated of political subjects any more than Nicole or Bourdaloue. He viewed society only from the heights of Christianity. If he exalts the splendours of the court and the king, it is to humiliate them all the more profoundly under the hand of God. The root of his eloquence is in religion, as the form of it is in the Bible, the language of which he applied so marvellously to the things of his time. He touched on history and politics in only two works,[l] written for the dauphin. Even there it is the preacher who speaks. He unrolls before the dauphin the sequence of the purposes of God. He demonstrated to him according to the Bible the sacredness of royalty, and if he deduced from this sacredness the duty of obedience for subjects, he also deduced corelative duties for kings. He recognises the fundamental law that kings should be respected; he warns them against the danger of their passions, above all against the mania for conquests which ruin the people. The clergy of the seventeenth century ruled the court and the world because it was disinterested. It took the temporal government of France, such as Louis XIV had made it, and strove to raise it to a Christian ideal.

The government had a panegyrist of another disposition — Louis XIV himself. Louis XIV was not content to be the author or inspirator of the acts of his reign, he was also its first, one might say its only political writer. His *Mémoires*,[m] of which the basis belongs to him, and of which it matters little that the style has been polished by Périgny or Pellisson, explain his conduct admirably. It is drawn there with the fidelity which he himself admired and which he hoped would win so much public admiration, that there was nothing to hide.[b]

THE THIRD PERIOD

The third period has an entirely different aspect. Royalty has so much abused its principle that it is being discussed. The Revocation, whose aim was to complete the reign of silence at home, caused an outbreak of a thousand rebellious voices beyond the frontiers which had its echoes in France. The war which Louis XIV waged for one idea brought back the reign of ideas. That confusion of king and country which hitherto had been complete suddenly ceased. Formerly everything was admired; everything was well. The plaints which arose from devastated fields and ruined industries dealt a blow to this optimism. La Bruyère in a few lines paints a terrifying picture of the French peasant. Fénelon in a letter to Louis XIV judges with mournful severity both the government and the character of the king. Now everything is not all right and other things are sought for. Vauban proposes tax reform; Bois-Guilbert, a whole new economic system. To this desolate reality Fénelon opposes in his *Télémaque* a Utopia, an ideal city — the Salento of King Idomeneus. To the perpetual warfare the abbé de Saint-Pierre[n] would substitute his project for perpetual peace, which appeared in 1713, and to the government by one man a government by several. Finally in a room in his hôtel at Versailles a man, a duke and a peer, every evening — his day as a courtier over — shuts himself up and with what he has seen and heard still vivid in his mind, adds a few pages to that colossal monument known as the *Mémoires de Saint-Simon*.[o] It is from this that posterity, disabused of eulogy and panegyric, will learn to know another king, another Versailles from those which Racine and Bossuet have shown it. In that period of French literature what is uppermost are new ideas. What matters it now whether the form be elegant and harmonious as with Fénelon, energetic and incorrect as with Saint-Simon, diffuse and dull as with the abbé de Saint-Pierre? The interest no longer lies here; the day of marvellous style and the time of art



JACQUES BENIGNE BOSSUET
(1627-1704)

for art's sake is past. Henceforth the great writers will write only to uphold a thesis, propose a reform, or prepare a revolution. Their greatness will be measured by their success. The eighteenth century has begun.

THE DRAMA: TRAGEDY

The sixteenth century handed down, in France, two forms of dramatic poetry, the mystery plays — that is to say, the religious drama — and the tragedy, a so-called imitation of the ancient form. Mystery plays were, in 1548, forbidden in Paris; the ancient tragedy had become sterile. The real French theatre remained to be founded.[c]

Corneille

At last Corneille appears. *Mélite* is the play given and the public applauds it with transports under which there seems to lurk premonition of the glory to which dramatic art is later to attain in France. Corneille surpasses rather than falls short of this expectation. Having made a deep study of the ancient tragic writers and the dramatic authors of modern times, he weighs carefully all the rules which he observes them to have used, and, while slavishly following none, adopts those which he finds most conformable to his own needs. With the ease of one who is their superior, or at least their equal, he reveals the inmost workings of the minds and hearts of the famous men whom he introduces on the stage; breathes into them, as it were, his own enthusiasms, raises them up to his own high stature. He presents his characters with the fidelity of history, but in proportions that would alone command admiration. He paints portraits of a resemblance so striking that they seem to have come from the hand of the subtlest of political writers, the most consummate of statesmen, or the greatest of military leaders. To his astonished and enraptured countrymen he gives *The Cid*, *Les Horaces*, *Cinna*, *Polyeucte*, *Pompée*, *Rodogune*, and *Héraclius*, and may be said to create French comedy when he writes *Le Menteur*. This genius seems the more sublime when it is compared with the simplicity and modesty of his private life. In his old age his head is crowned with laurels, and it is of him that the great Racine says, "It is not easy to find a poet who unites such a number of talents, so many excellent manifestations of art, force, judgment, wit. We cannot too greatly admire the nobility and economy of his subjects, the vehemence of his passion, the depth and gravity of his sentiments, and the dignity as well as the prodigious variety of his characters."[q] Pierre Corneille was born at Rouen, 1606, and according to a time-worn chronicle,[1] "of considerable parents, his father holding no small places under Louis XIII." He was brought up to the bar but soon deserted it. His great success brought upon him the enmity of his rivals, even Richelieu entering into this cabal. He was chosen a member of the French Academy. His private life was uneventful, due perhaps to the fact that his manners were simple and he was never successful in paying court to the great. He died in Paris in 1684, leaving several children. Corneille's works consist of thirty plays, tragedies and comedies.[a]

The drama of Corneille preserves a certain freedom of manner that is not found in the succeeding generation. Thus he chooses sacred as well as profane subjects; he restores Christianity to the theatre whence the prejudices

[1] *Biographical Dictionary*, London, 1798, 15 vols.

of a good society had banished it ; from the acts of the martyrs he borrowed the subject of *Polyeucte* and *Théodore*. In such works as *Nicomède* or *Don Sanche* the comic element mingles with the tragic. Above all he finds it difficult to conform to the prescriptions of Aristotle's *Poetics* to the rule of the three unities. Now Chapelain had just discovered the *Poetics;* he had recommended its precepts to Mairet for his *Sophonisbe*. Leagued with the Academy against the success of the *Cid*, he tried to impose them on Corneille. Being commissioned to draw up "the sentiments of the Academy" concerning this play, he did not fail to denounce the author's violations of the unity of time and the unity of place. Corneille defended his tragedies. Finally, seized with scruples and intimidated by this phantom of a system of poetics made for a theatre wholly different from the French, Corneille submits. He writes plays following all the rules, such as *Pertharite*, *Agésilas*, *Attila ;* but it is just these which are his weakest.[c]



JEAN BAPTISTE RACINE
(1639-1699)

Racine

Racine, who rose when Corneille declined, founded his dramas on a very different principle. With him the great motive is passion, and passion no longer arrested by the conflict of duty. His characters are as though carried away by their frenzies. The type of Racine's tragedy is indeed the drama of passion. What he excels in painting is love, furious and cruel with Hermione, Roxane, Phædra; plaintive and resigned with Iphigenia or Junia; grave and ready for sacrifice with Monima; full of tears and of gentle reproaches with Berenice.

This man, who divided with Corneille the glory of French classical tragedy, was born in Ferté-Milon (1639) of bourgeois parents. He received his education at the college of Beauvais and at Port-Royal. Becoming disgusted with theology, which study he had entered into, he went to Paris, where he formed his friendships with Molière and Boileau. It was his ode on the marriage of Louis XIV, for which he received a pension, which first brought him into prominence. Of a sensitive disposition and inclined to melancholy, the criticisms and intrigues of the court made him renounce dramatic composition. However after his marriage in 1677 he became reconciled with the gentlemen of Port-Royal and was appointed historiographer by Louis XIV. At the suggestion of Madame de Maintenon he wrote *Esther* and afterward, *Athalie*. His tragedies are *Andromaque*, *Britannicus*, *Bérénice*, *Mithridate*, *Iphigénie*, and *Phèdre*. "I avow," says Voltaire,[d] "that I regard *Iphigénie* as the chef-d'œuvre of the stage." Racine was admitted to the Academy in 1673. The ill reception of his *Athalie* caused him to entirely renounce poetry. Hurt by a disapproving criticism of the

king on a memorial he had written, "he conceived dreadful ideas of the king's displeasure: and indulging his chagrin and fears, brought on a fever, which surpassed the power of medicine, for he died of it, after being grievously afflicted with pains, in 1699." [1a]

With Racine French classical tragedy is finally constituted. It is a quite peculiar species of literature, and one which could have arisen only at one particular period of French history. It differs from Greek tragedy for it dispenses with the accompaniment of music and does not admit choruses.[2] It is the antipodes of the Shakespearian drama. The latter journeys freely through time and space, multiplies characters, allows the interposition of the crowd, mingles the comic with the tragic, speaks alternately in the most poetic and the most trivial language, evokes spectres from the tomb, brings shipwrecks, battles, murders, executions on the scene. French tragedy makes the entire action take place in a period which, according to the precepts laid down, must not exceed twenty-four hours; it never changes the scene and to avoid difficulties everything generally takes place in the vestibule of a palace or the square of a city; it admits no more than three or at most four characters, to whom are added confidants whose mission is to listen to what the chief personages have to say to the public; when a valiant army or an immense crowd is to be indicated an accessory character is made to follow the principal actor. It never unbends, never exhibits either a buffoon or a poltroon, it seldom takes its subjects from elsewhere than Greek and Roman antiquity; it brings on the stage only noble personages, gods, demigods, heroes, emperors, kings, or princes, or servants who are not less dignified and who know how to keep their places. It speaks the noblest and purest language; it leaves the spectres in their vaults, and reduces the fantastic element to the recital of some dream; all murders, the assassination of Pyrrhus, the poisoning of Britannicus, the strangling of Monima, the execution of Haman or of Athaliah are relegated behind the scenes, out of sight of the spectator. If the actor cannot do otherwise than kill himself on the stage, he kills himself neatly with a poniard or sword of a temper peculiar to tragedy, for they do not draw blood. There is no action on the stage: we only see the impression which the action produces on the characters, and hear the reflections with which it inspires them.

This mould of classical tragedy maintained itself intact for nearly two centuries. It contented the contemporaries of Louis XIV, of Louis XV, of Robespierre and of Napoleon successively. The neighbouring nations hastened to adopt it: even England herself did so though she continued to play Shakespeare.

COMEDY

French comedy, during more than half the seventeenth century, was feeling her way. She was hesitating between two types — antique comedy, so difficult to transport to the French stage, and naturally cold because it represented manners so very different from those of France; and Italian comedy, in which under the most diverse names there incessantly recur the old good-man who is deceived, the shrewd ward, the bold lover, the cunning valet, or the complaisant soubrette. Most of the comedies on which Corneille tried his hand and the first which came from Molière belong to the Italian type.

[1] *Biographical Dictionary*, London, 1798, 15 vols.

[2] Except in *Esther* and *Athalie;* but these two sacred dramas are not, for Racine, dramas for the theatre.]

When, in 1659, Molière put the *Précieuses ridicules* on the stage, there was a surprise almost equal to that which had been occasioned by the *Cid*. After French tragedy, French comedy was now revealing itself. The comical element proceeded not from some flimsy plot, a hundred times repeated, but from the lively painting of contemporary manners. Molière was to rise higher still and to paint not the absurdities of a day but the eternal characters of humanity. Those whom he brings before us in his great comedies — the hypocrite and dupe of his *Tartuffe*, the Alceste, the Philinte and Célimène of his *Misanthrope;* the Harpagon of his *Avare;* the vain *roturier* of his *Bourgeois gentilhomme*, his *Femmes savantes*, his *Malade imaginaire* — are so far as concerns their main characteristics, of all times and all countries. Yet these personages, though they are universal types, are quite specially of the time and country in which Molière lived. Molière's destiny required that he should have to please three sorts of public: the court, the men of letters, and the people. For the king he wrote *Amphitryon* and the comic ballets; for the literary men he drew his immortal types; for the people he returned to the comic elements of the Italian theatre and the theatres at the fairs and he raised them to the level of high art. If any one of these three very diverse influences had been exercised alone upon the genius of Molière, it might have refined, or ennobled, or vulgarised him to excess; but by a happy combination he owed to the one that elegance and nobility, to one that depth and knowledge, to the third that overflowing *verve*, that power at once comic and dramatic, which are the characteristics of his genius. He was not exclusively either the poet of the court or of the Academy or of the crowd; this is why he has been and will remain the national poet *par excellence*.[c]

Molière, whose true name was Jean Baptiste Pocquelin, was born at Paris about 1620. He was both son and grandson to *valets de chambres* on one side, and tapestry-makers on the other, to Louis XIII and was designed for the latter business, with a view of succeeding his father in that place. But the grandfather being very fond of the boy, and at the same time a great lover of plays, used to take him often with him to the hôtel de Bourgogne; which presently roused up Molière's natural genius and taste for dramatic representations, and created in him such a disgust to the trade of tapestry-making, that at last his father consented to let him go, and study under the Jesuits, at the college of Clermont. He finished his studies there in five years' time, in which he contracted an intimate friendship with Chapelle, Bernier, and Cyrano. Chapelle, with whom Bernier was an associate in his studies, had the famous Gassendi for his tutor, who willingly admitted Molière to his lectures, as he afterwards also admitted Cyrano. It was here that Molière deeply drank of that sound philosophy, and stored himself with those great principles of knowledge, which served as a foundation to all his comic productions. When Louis XIII went to Narbonne, in 1641, his studies were interrupted; for his father, who was grown infirm, not being able to attend the court, Molière was obliged to go there to supply his place. Upon his return to Paris, however, when his father was dead, his passion for the stage, which had induced him first to study, revived more strongly than ever; and if it be true, as some have said, that he, for a time studied the law, and was admitted an advocate, he soon yielded to the influence of his stars, which had destined him to be the restorer of comedy in France.

What became of him from 1648 to 1652 we know not, this interval being the time of the civil wars, which caused disturbances in Paris; but it is probable, that he was employed in composing some of those pieces which were

afterwards exhibited to the public. La Béjart, an actress of Champagne, waiting, as well as he, for a favourable time to display her talents, Molière was particularly kind to her; and as their interests became mutual, they formed a company together, and went to Lyons in 1653, where Molière produced his first play, called, *L'Étourdi*, or *The Blunderers*. In 1663, Molière obtained a pension of a thousand livres; and, in 1665, his company was altogether in his majesty's service.

His last comedy was *Le malade imaginaire*, or *The Hypochondriac;* and it was acted for the fourth time, February 17th, 1673. Upon this very day Molière died.

ARCHITECTURE

The fine arts, even more than literature, bear the impress of the period, because a government has more means to act on them. If it cannot create them, nor supply individual inspiration, it can at least impress a certain direction by the nature of the works it orders from artists, and the nature of the patronage which it affords them. For instance, Louis XIV had a passion for building. His architectural constructions are of a style apart, in harmony with his tastes, the needs of his court, and the characteristics of his royalty.[b]



FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE-FÉNELON
(1651–1715)

The French architecture of the Renaissance happily blended the elements of ogival art and those of ancient art recovered in Italy. The seventeenth century broke more completely with the national past. One of the latest cathedrals is that of Orleans, constructed under Henry IV and his successors, but which had been designed in the sixteenth century. The ogival style was no longer in fashion; it was freely regarded as a relic of ancient barbarism, and it was branded with the epithet of "Gothic." Numerous acts of vandalism were committed on the most venerable monuments of the past. In 1699 Robert de Cotte, under the pretext of "restoring" the interior of Notre Dame de Paris, destroyed the close, pulled down the rood-loft, burned the wooden stalls, tore out the tombs and stone effigies, and broke the coloured glass windows.

The dominating influence of the age was that of the Italian monuments, not only of the first epoch of the Renaissance but also that of its decadence. However, French artists did not limit themselves to imitation; and under the inspiration of those ideas of grandeur and majesty which are the *cachet* of the seventeenth century, they created a truly original art, as characteristic of Louis XIV's reign as was its literature.

To obtain more imposing façades, instead of dividing them up as in the preceding epoch into almost equal stories, each distinguished by a different ornamentation, now only one principal story was admitted. Below, it rests on a ground floor which sometimes is almost a basement; above, it is

surmounted by an attic which was only half or two-thirds the height of the principal story. Everything is sacrificed to the latter. To enhance still further the desired impression of unity and grandeur the ornamentation is greatly reduced. None of those architectural accidents, those happy caprices, or that ingenious variety which in sixteenth century monuments interested the eye and the mind — nothing but great sober lines severe to monotony. This is what is called the colossal style and what might be called the Louis XIV style.[c]

Versailles is the indestructible monument of the royalty of Louis XIV. One is struck at first by its large proportions; it is above all its majestic regularity which produces such imposing effects. All is in harmony with the habits of the court of the great king. One may criticise the arrangements, and Saint-Simon[o] without being an artist has done so with humour, sometimes with truth. But the ensemble leaves a profound impression of admiration, almost of respect. One feels that Versailles, to-day a vast solitude, was built to be peopled by an immense court, where Louis XIV lived in the midst of a France made in his image. Versailles, with its grandeur, its regularity, its majestic and classic ornamentation, merits to be the type of an architecture truly royal. If nobility is one of the principal conceptions of the ideal of beauty, this ideal has never been attained in an equal degree. Also, even as the court of Louis XIV gave the tone to the greater part of European courts, Versailles has become the type and model of the greater part of royal and foreign châteaux and gardens.

Other châteaux, like those of St. Cloud and Marly, were built almost in the same style by Mansart and Le Nôtre, the one the architect of the palace, and the other of the gardens of Versailles. St. Cloud was the residence of Monsieur, brother of the king. Marly, which was begun after Nimeguen, could offer a sort of retreat to the court fatigued by magnificence. Meudon, Sceaux, Choisy, built for princes, princesses, or ministers, produced in their more restricted proportions the essential characteristics of this royal architecture.

Paris has kept fewer traces of Louis XIV; he rarely made long sojourns there. The principal monuments he raised there were the triumphal arches at the portes du Trône, St. Antoine, St. Bernard, St. Denis, and St. Martin, monuments erected to celebrate his re-entry into Paris after the Peace of the Pyrenees, or his victories during the war with Holland. Meanwhile he also joined the Louvre to the Tuileries by means of the magnificent colonnade designed by Perrault. To this reign also belongs the northern boulevards arranged as great avenues, the Champs-Élysées, and finally the garden of the Tuileries.[b]

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

The taste for statuary did not revive until the time of the Italian regent Marie de' Medici. Puget (1622–1694) was an independent. The other sculptors of the time bent themselves to monarchical discipline. They entered academies of sculpture and painting and placed themselves under the direction of Lebrun, for at that time it seemed natural to subordinate sculpture to painting. The sculpture of the great epoch of Louis XIV shows the influence of the vigorous studies the artists made from the antique. It is a diversified sculpture, but skilful and strong.

The Renaissance had been in France more brilliant for architecture and even sculpture than for painting. The French had still much to learn from the Italians and the Flemish. They had a few painters, but they had no French

school. Besides it was in Italy that the first generation of French artists of the seventeenth century was formed. Lesueur is perhaps the sole great painter who did not leave France. Of these illustrious travellers, some preferred to apply themselves to imitation of the severe design of the Roman school; others stopped in the Venetian cities and sought to worm from the canvases of Titian and Paul Veronese the secret of their admirable colouring and obtain a knowledge of the science of composition on a large scale. Whence comes the great variety in the French school. But all got the feeling of classical beauty, from the brilliant sky, the living types, and the magnificent antiquities of Italy. Moreover the French artists found a hospitable welcome in the peninsula; at a time when their kings were not rich enough to furnish artists means of support, work was ordered of them by the popes, cardinals, sovereigns, and great lords of Italy. Colbert's foundation of the Academy of Rome was to assure the education of French genius, for centuries, by the genius of antiquity and of Italy.

In France the painters were organised as a corporation which was known as the Academy of St. Luke, and into which no one was received, as in the corporation of joiners or hatters, until he had served an apprenticeship or had produced a masterpiece. The academy was all powerful in the art-world until in 1648 it was confronted with a rival that eclipsed it — the Academy of Painting and Sculpture. We must not forget that in 1673 the first exhibition of painting took place in the court of the Palais Royal. Hitherto there had been open-air exhibitions — a kind of picture fairs, as for example that held in the place Dauphine. In 1699 the exposition was held in the Apollo Gallery of the Louvre.

As in political and literary history, the history of painting in the seventeenth century may be divided into three periods. The first sixty years are years of artistic freedom; with the personal government of the king the rule of Lebrun over the fine arts was established. At the latter's death a transformation took place. When the regent Marie de' Medici wished to decorate the vast galleries of the Luxembourg palace, she believed that she could not do better than to summon the great Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens. But she soon became better acquainted with the artistic resources of France, and sent for a number of Frenchmen to collaborate in the decoration of the Luxembourg. Among them were Simon Vouet (1590–1649), Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), and Philippe de Champagne (1602–1674). If we examine the dates of the deaths of these artists and others, such as Claude Lorraine (1600–1682), Lesueur (1616–1655), or better, perhaps, the most brilliant period of their productiveness it will be admitted that Louis XIV and Lebrun had no influence over them whatever.

In the second period, Charles Lebrun of Paris (1619–1690) was the leader of the French school. He might have, as has been said, paraphrased the saying attributed to the king and have said "*L'Art, c'est moi.*" He was the Louis XIV of the fine arts. The artist, whose genius sympathised so completely with that of his sovereign, was nevertheless a very great painter. He possessed the sacred fire; at the age of fifteen he had produced two paintings that attracted attention, and he developed his natural gift by arduous labour and incessant study. He went to Rome and received instruction from Poussin. He painted for Louis XIV those immense canvases representing the exploits of Alexander — the *Crossing the Granicus*, the *Battle of Arbela*, the *Defeat of Porus*, and the *Entrance into Babylon* — which form an epic series. Lebrun pushed perfection of detail so far as to have horses sketched in Syria, so that they would be typically Asiatic.

MUSIC AND THE OPERA

It is easy to count the musicians that France produced in the sixteenth century; the true home of their art was then in Italy. Nevertheless the French court acquired a taste for lyric representations, and the kings, to free the art from religious domination, founded troops of lay artists, and at the head of their singers and instrumentalists they placed a superintendent of music.

These representations which the French called *ballets* or *mascarades* were an incoherent mixture of the three arts of poetry, music, and dancing which the modern opera has brought into harmony. A ballet was divided into *parties* or acts, and the *parties* into *entrées* or scenes, both of variable number. There was no fixed plan for the composition — or rather there was no composition. In front of a great canvas the king and the nobles who were taking part in the *divertissement* composed or had composed the words at their fancy, accommodated them to or made them accommodate familiar airs, putting the words into the hands of the ladies, in order that they might follow the piece, abandoning themselves in the end to the *boutade*, that is to say to the inspiration.

Music was considered such an inferior art that the instrumentalists were recruited from among the lackeys, and to be a violin player was almost a sign of servitude. The airs were vulgar; the instruments were reduced to lutes and viols, the dances were slow and monotonous like the *bourrée* of the peasant of central France. Such was the court ballet, such, for example, the ballet of the *Délivrance de Renaud* danced by Louis XIII and his courtiers in 1614. The court was lost in admiration and it was declared that Europe had never heard anything so ravishing.

Mazarin tried to revive the fashion by bringing dancers, singers, and musicians from Italy, obtaining the libretti and the music from composers of the same country. The courtiers admired in order to please the cardinal and the queen-regent, but Madame de Motteville[p] admits in all frankness that these representations seemed to her mortally long and tiresome. It is probable that French ears were not yet trained to Italian music and that Madame de Motteville, like Molière's Alceste, would have given all the operas for one of the old popular airs like "*J'aime mieux ma mie, au gué.*"

The taste of the court was too frivolous, the actors in their quality of king or noble too unruly for opera thus conceived to raise itself to the level of a serious art. Therefore the public but privileged theatres succeeded to the aristocratic or court theatre. The abbé Perrin, a prolific writer of *livrets*, although a most mediocre poet, associated himself with Cambert, the most distinguished of French composers and with the marquis de Sourdéac, who understood scenery and stage mechanism. He obtained letters patent on June 28th, 1669. Thus was founded the Royal Academy of Music, which has nothing in common with the learned academies of the age; for the Italian word *accademia* signifies simply concert. The first result of this association was the representation of *Pomone*, in 1671, words by Perrin; music by Cambert. The associates were preparing to mount another opera when misunderstandings broke out among them. Lully took advantage of this and through Madame de Montespan's influence was given the privilege. Cambert in vexation went to England where, although he was well received by Charles II, he died of chagrin. Lully [himself an Italian], who had claimed that it was impossible to write an elegant score to French words, now became director of the first French National Theatre of Music (1672).

Lully created a music distinctly French in spirit and his influence extended over his contemporaries and successors, but his was the only original work that appeared at the Academy. Its organisation was too authoritative to lend itself easily to innovations. A large portion of the public was not interested in that solemn monotonous music which only concerned itself with mythological tragedies. Already in the seventeenth century (1640) the *Comédie des Chansons*, sometimes attributed to Timothy de Chillac and sometimes to Charles Beys, had furnished the type of a kind that resembles both vaudeville and the French *opéra-comique*. It was called the *comédie à ariettes* and became universally popular. In 1678 at the St. Laurent fair Allard and Maurice Vanderberg presented the *Forces of Love and Magic*, which had a great success. This irritated Lully, and invoking the privilege of the Academy he had an order served upon these two itinerant directors to reduce their orchestra to four violins and one oboe. The Academy decided however to sign a contract with Catherine Vanderberg, permitting her to give pieces with song, orchestra, and dance. Such was the origin of the *opéra-comique*, a term first employed by Le Sage, in 1715.

RAPID DECLINE OF THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV

One characteristic of this age was that the efflorescence of arts and letters was of short duration. The age was great so long as Louis was surrounded by men whose talent had already seen the light when he began to protect them; but new geniuses were not born and when that generation was exhausted another did not arise to replace it.

The personal government presents but a single and very short period of literary and artistic splendour. The last great work of secular literature, *Athalie*, dates from 1691. If Bossuet, Fénelon, Bourdaloue, and Massillon — that is to say the group of churchmen were not there; if Saint-Simon were not secretly writing his accusing *Mémoires*, one might say that not a single work of high literary value was written in France after the Peace of Ryswick (1697). The same observation may be made of the arts. Many of the great painters of the seventeenth century owed nothing to Louis XIV, for Le Valentin died in 1632, Lesueur in 1655, Laurent de Lahire in 1656, Poussin in 1665. Claude Lorraine and Philippe de Champagne, who died, the one in 1682, the other in 1674, were already in the fullness of their genius when the king began to govern. Of the four great architects of the age, Mansart, Claude Perrault, Blondel, and Bruant, none lived to see the year 1697. Puget, the great sculptor, died in 1694, Lully in 1687. The poet Quinault, who usually furnished the latter the libretto of his operas, died the following year. After these there is certainly a wide gap in the history of French art.[c] Indeed, as Buckle says: "At the moment when Louis XIV died, there was scarcely a writer or an artist in France who enjoyed European reputation."[e]

A FRENCH VIEW OF THE EFFECT OF THE AGE

But it had been a royal epoch! Louis XIV had the rôle of a demi-god. His Olympus was only a theatre, his *fêtes* were only fairy-like scenes and masquerades, but all was on a grandiose scale. Before his time the king of France lived in a strong castle. He was, even after the time of Francis I, a mighty baron shut up behind his battlements, his thick walls, his deep moats. One can see the gloomy shadow of the monarch flitting from window to window in the vast halls of the Château de Blois, isolated, cold, imprisoned, anx-

ious. Spies, guards, armed men; courts where echoed the tread of sentinels; secret staircases where men charged with dark errands mounted and descended — all proclaimed a shadowy king watching with his hand upon his sword, spying out all, sharing the fear which he inspired in others. But under Louis XIV all was changed. The staircases widened, air and light circulated in the royal house; *fêtes* replaced the gloomy official receptions; courtiers succeeded soldiers. This time royalty was sure of victory. It trod on laurels, as half a century later it walked on roses, without dreaming that either the laurel- or the rose-strewn path would lead to the scaffold.*f* On that splendid horizon of the seventeenth century great storm clouds appeared one by one, lightning still unaccompanied by thunder flashed through space; but the eyes of the multitude, blinded by the royal sun, did not perceive these threatening gleams. Intoxicated France abandoned herself to the contemplation of her present glory, without thinking to seize or to understand the true reasons of that glory, and did not realise that she was being dragged to a yawning chasm.

Never was error more excusable. How resist that seduction which all realised, but which all contributed to exercise? Society is like an immense concert all of whose parts mingle together to form, by their divers accents, a universal harmony. Every class, every man, gave all that he had to give to the work of common grandeur. The mass of the people, confident in the good intentions of their prince, comforted by the good order of the administration, bore their burden the more lightly, and patiently awaited from the future a still greater relief. The clergy, more worthy and more enlightened than in any other epoch of French history, instructed and guided the society it no longer governed. The nobility, which had gained in discipline not less than in polish what it had lost in independence, furnished the majority of the warriors; the third estate furnished almost all the rest, especially the great administration and the great writers. By means of intellectual and moral energy, of practical sense, of inventive and active force, the French bourgeoisie reached the highest degree of its development — what a bourgeoisie, to have produced within a half century Colbert, Corneille, Pascal, Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, Boileau, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Arnauld, Nicole, Domat, Fabert, Poussin, Lesueur, Lorraine, Lebrun, the Perraults, and Puget, without counting those men as powerful and more for evil than for good — Fouquet and Louvois!

Marvellous assemblage of the most highly developed and complete society that has appeared in the world since ancient times; vast and living picture whose aspect produced on those who regarded it an enduring fascination! All peoples admired and imitated it. The language, the fashions, the ideas of France invaded Europe. Literary styles, like the styles of costume, like the styles of objects of art and of luxury, like the habits of life, formed themselves, at least in the upper classes, and for long, after the French. It was not the breath of a momentary fancy, but it was an atmosphere which enveloped little by little all objects and all beings, a medium outside of which it became impossible for man to live.*g*

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